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THE DIARY OF A FRENCH ARMY CHAPLAIN

FÉLIX KLEIN

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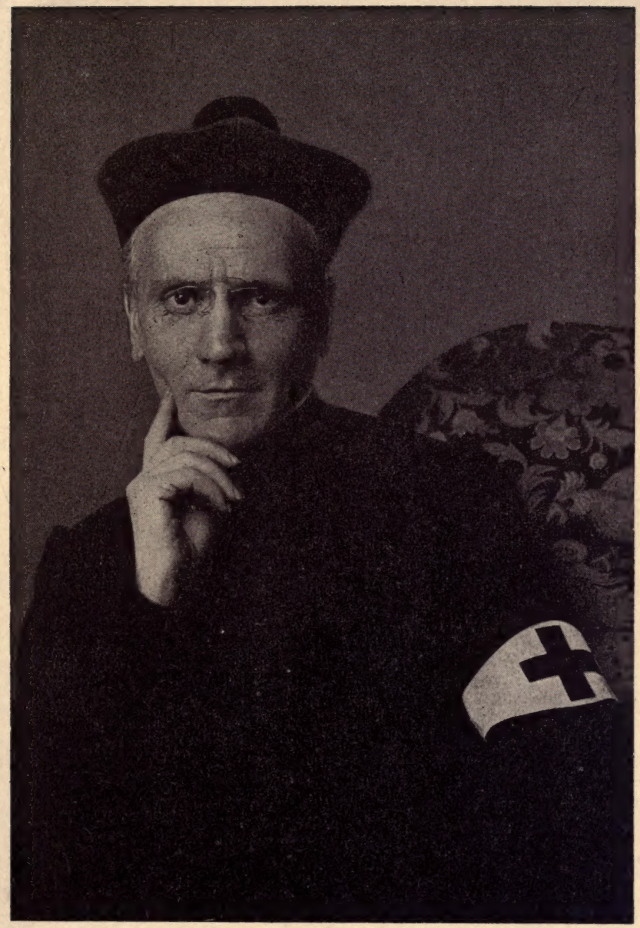
DIARY OF A FRENCH ARMY CHAPLAIN



Bien à vous
Jehan Klein

DIARY OF A FRENCH ARMY CHAPLAIN

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France

By

ABBÉ FÉLIX KLEIN

American Hospital, Neuilly, Paris

Translated from "La Guerre vue d'une Ambulance"
by M. HARRIET M. CAPES

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To

M. HENRY CARTON DE WIART,

Keeper of the Seals,

Vice-President of the Cabinet-Council of the Kingdom of Belgium.

Monsieur le Ministre,—

Permit me to dedicate to you these notes from a Military Hospital which portray, under one of its most moving aspects, the War which is covering our two countries with so great a mourning and so great a glory.

After your heroic Sovereign, and with your illustrious President of the Cabinet, it is you whose name to all nations, and first of all to France, most absolutely represents Belgium, that voluntary martyr for the right, which for all time will remain the wonder of the human race.

But even this great honour takes from your spirit nothing of its Christian simplicity, and you continue to trust as a friend him whose heart, for close upon twenty years, has beaten in unison with yours for the same God and the same ideal. Agreeing on literature,

on sociology, on religion, we now find ourselves united in the cause of the most intense national anguish. My sympathy, already so profound, grows all the greater for it. That is why, dear Monsieur le Ministre, I felt drawn to express it to you once again by dedicating to you these pages of suffering, which are also pages of hope.

FÉLIX KLEIN.

AMBULANCE AMÉRICAINE DE NEUILLY,
12*th January*, 1915.

ANSWER OF M. HENRY CARTON DE WIART

LE HAVRE,
14*th January*, 1915.

Dear Monsieur l'Abbé,—

I had read in the Revue des Deux-Mondes *your* Impressions d'Ambulance *with curiosity from its first lines—with emotion from its first pages.*

I do not wonder that your qualities of mind and heart, which for a long time past have—notably in Belgium—won for you so much admiration and friendship, were found by the Great War at the service of the purest patriotism and the noblest charity. Nor do I wonder that your philosophy so plainly detected and set forth—mingled with the atmosphere of our battle-fields and our hospital-wards—that fragrance of Heroism of which humanity had well-nigh lost the memory.

That penetrating and comforting fragrance, which overcomes and makes up for so many physical and moral horrors!

I rejoice at the thought that your book will help us to preserve it.

You wish to associate my name with such a work.

In the name of Belgium I proudly accept the honour.

This homage of a tribute to a fine endurance offered by a Frenchman and a Priest to Belgium which is suffering so greatly, at a moment when our soldiers are fighting side by side to liberate our devastated soil, is yet another link between us.

H. Carton de Wiart.

PREFACE

THE real Ambulance is that which operates on the field of battle. But those hospitable abodes which continue and complete its work, can also claim some right to that name which stands for a fine devotion.

Prevented by insufficient strength from joining the first kind, it was in one of the second, that, under the name of Chaplain, the author of these pages was able to work.

The American Hospital at Neuilly, to which he was called, was privileged, as soon as opened, that is to say from the beginning of September, to go forth to gather in the wounded from the very Front. Moreover, the Front at that time was only too near us; we went forth to it in the morning and came back from it at evening. Since that time of anguish, the fields of battle, thank God, have gone further off; but the wounded, brought back from them after twenty-four or forty-eight hours, retain an only too lively impression of them.

These notes, taken day by day, will therefore give a sufficiently straightforward picture of the War. If they are worth less than those written

by the fighters, at least they come from a witness, a friend, who receives and listens to them still trembling from the struggle.

If, on the other hand, they do not breathe the heroic joy of battle and depict its trials rather than its glory, it will not be very difficult to find consolation for him who, no more than we, cares not for exalting in himself the warlike instinct.

Civilized peoples, and it is to their credit, so little love war for war's sake, that the greatest crime of which they accuse Germany is of having unchained it.

But, though having had themselves no wish for it, though only seeking to rid the world of it and to cut it off at the root, they are fighting to-day with no less courage and no less determination.

In order to give these impressions one merit which I hope will supply the place of many others—sincerity,—I will tell them just as they followed each other in my mind. I will nevertheless abbreviate those of the first month, while the War did not yet show itself as seen from a hospital, leaving just enough to serve as an introduction and recall the feelings that moved us all during that unforgettable month of August, and to show in what state of mind I approached my new duties.

One defect which I shall take care not to correct is that I have more than once expressed fears or hopes that were not justified by events ; my excuse,

if there were need of one, would be that my impressions changed with the incidents of the War itself. Let those cast the first stone at me who experienced in their own hearts—I don't say who manifested—sentiments exactly similar after the defeat at Mons and the day after the victory of the Marne! Let me add that at the time when I was making these notes I was far from thinking they would be so quickly published. If they have not, as I conjectured, waited for the lengthened delay which might have improved them, the fault is that of others rather than mine; and I am not afraid to lay it to the excessive benevolence of two Editors of Reviews and a friendly Publisher.

But what does all this matter in such tragic days? Let us tell the truth; that is enough. I hope that each reader, living with our wounded, will feel for them still greater love and gratitude; I hope that at the sight of their courage, his confidence in the cause for which they suffered will be redoubled; I hope that, seeing the atrocious evils of this War, he will be strengthened in the sole determination to which all our energies should tend: so to weaken Germany, responsible for all, that she can never again commit the same crime.

FÊLIX KLEIN.

NEUILLY, 31*st January*, 1915.

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DIARY OF A FRENCH ARMY CHAPLAIN

I

MEUDON,

3rd and 4th August, 1914.

WHAT is happening keeps no proportion with human intelligence, which is overwhelmed by it as by natural cataclysms—cyclones, tidal waves, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions. It is an almost similar letting loose of brutal and irresistible forces, and the fate of the world seems to hang on either a blind fatality, or worse still, on the most unscrupulous brigands. The only thing that reassures us somewhat amidst this bewildering dizziness, is the idea that out of this trial, as out of others, for those who so will, there will come good and a better moral order all the more precious that it has cost so much.

Even that, I own, makes clear but a part of the perplexing mystery; for the rest, we must bow before the law which allows men to make use of their free will to the extremity of virtue or vice, of wisdom or madness.

Perhaps, in putting down what I may see of the catastrophe, I shall understand better the lessons it holds, and shall become capable some day of speaking of them usefully. If I might thus in my small way, help toward the Spring-tide which will follow this rough weather, and let fall into our blood-stained furrows a few seeds of the harvest of the future, I should feel more easily consoled at staying behind when the others go, and waiting doing nothing, perhaps for a long time, for the wounded that I dream at least of helping.

But how can one collect one's thoughts in the midst of such an upheaval ?

Since the day of the mobilization, I have felt myself incapable of settling down to any occupation except material ones. My garden gains by it, but not any real work. The writings I had on hand are abandoned ; no more correspondence even ; who knows if letters will arrive ? And what news is there to tell, that may not seem insignificant beside graver matters that have happened when it is read ? For it is one of the stupendous features of this unequalled crisis that it seems in some sort to follow a geometrical progression, and each day to grow in intensity as in extent. The upheavals of to-day add themselves to those of yesterday, which still exist, and neither one nor the other will have disappeared when to-morrow's arise.

Let us consider once more the fearful series.

On the 24th of July the Austrian ultimatum to the Serbian Government. On the 25th the German Ambassador proceeds to the Quai d'Orsay, to notify in comminatory terms that Berlin sides with Vienna; panic in the different Bourses; recall of the Austrian Ambassador from Belgrade, notwithstanding the almost complete acceptance of the draconian conditions he presented twenty-four hours before. Between Austria and Russia, which takes Serbia's part, England, on the 26th, hastily proposes a fourfold mediation. France and Italy consent; Germany, who knows what she wants to be at, temporizes; on the 27th, she says yes; on the 28th, she says no, and that same day Austria declares War on Serbia.

On July 29th, Russia mobilizes; all seems lost. Nevertheless, on the 30th, a personal intervention of the King of England between the Tsar and the Emperor of Austria gives some hope to the friends of peace; Russia consents to demobilize on certain conditions which Austria begins to examine.

That is the moment Germany chooses to send, on the 30th of July, the ultimatum to Petersburg and to Paris, at the same time proclaiming her own state of siege, so permitting the secret accomplishment of the final preparations.

As had been foreseen, the Tsar's Government took no notice of this demand, and on Saturday, August 1st, at seven o'clock in the evening, the

German Ambassador, in the name of William II, delivered to it the Declaration of War. On that same day the French mobilization was decreed. The next day, August 2nd, the German army invades Luxemburg—a neutral country—and at several points violates our own frontier. France is put into a state of siege.

On August 3rd, Belgium is required—by an ultimatum—to facilitate the German operations over her territory; she refuses, and, in her turn, sees her neutrality violated. Then Germany officially declares War with France; England declares War with Germany; Austria declares War with Russia. From the Urals to the Atlantic, from the Balkans to the mountains of Scotland, with hundreds of vessels, with thousands of regiments, navies and armies are set in motion. In Serbia, in Belgium, in Russia, on the Algerian coast, towns are bombarded. And while on land the cannon already roar, the ironclads sail the seas, and the heavens are crossed by aeroplanes seeking news or carrying explosives.

Oh! that Saturday the 1st August, when the terrible seriousness of the situation was suddenly revealed to a people still but little anxious! That morning three whole classes, three hundred thousand men, receive individually the order for immediate departure. Heedless of all else, giving no backward glance, leaving unfinished tasks begun,

taking no precaution for the future, completely absorbed in the solemn present, they leave family, undertakings, business. *Veni, sequere me!* orders the Country, without further explanation, and, like those called in the Gospel, they follow; they go to the frontier, to battle, probably to die. The astonishing thing is that not one murmurs and many are enthusiastic; but the women weep, and the children they are leaving. In the streets, in the squares, in the shops to which they are already rushing for provisions, wives, mothers, sweethearts, make moan. At the stations, to which they have accompanied their men, they try, for their sake, to keep a brave front; but when they come back alone . . .

In the middle of the afternoon, at the summons of telegraph or telephone, all the town-halls, all the stations, simultaneously post up the order for general mobilization, which enjoins four millions of men, at the risk of their lives, to help the country in danger. And all answer: "Here we are!" and just consult their time-table to make sure of when they must start.

The night was worse than the day. I don't speak only of the private nightmare that would not allow of a sleep lasting more than five minutes; outside, materially, the War broke the usual silence without ceasing. Over the lines of Montparnasse and the Invalides, between which the point of our

plateau juts out, train followed train with intervals but of a few minutes. At the bottom of the garden, heavy carts, motor-cars, shook the ground. Over my head, coming from Buc and Chalais, more impressive than all the rest, the squadrons of aeroplanes hummed. In the darkness it was truly like the sound of a flood, a flood at the height of a storm, but which, instead of waves to the distant sea, was rolling men, men, and still more men into the jaws of the guns.

Next morning, more tired than before this rough night, I went to say Mass for France, for her armies, for the soldiers of all nations who were about to die. The office was that for the Ninth Sunday after Pentecost, and in the Gospel this is what I read: "When Jesus drew near to Jerusalem, seeing the city, He wept over it, saying, If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes."[1] And then comes the picture of the murders and destruction of the war.

O Saviour! Thy message of peace is not yet understood by humanity. Weep with us now, no longer over one city about to be ruined, but over hundreds of cities; no longer for one small people, but for whole groups of nations and races.

God of compassion, may Thy tears console us; may they prevent us from ever doubting of Thy

[1] St. Luke xix.

love; may they preserve for us, whatever happens, resignation and our faith in Thee!

In this great confusion, we want to make the words of St. Paul in the Epistle of to-day our support: "Neither do you murmur . . . God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will make also with temptation issue that you may be able to bear it."[1]

August 5th.

The trial that weighs heaviest on hearts is made up principally of the risk of death to which so many sons, husbands, fathers, will be exposed. The terrible, but necessary wheel draws with it all healthy men from twenty to nearly fifty years old—all the flower and the strength, the best physical and intellectual energies. In Serbia, all those from sixteen to sixty spared by the two recent wars. From this individual anxiety nothing can free us, and it will last till the end of the struggle, changing day by day for a greater number of families into one accomplished fact, into mournful notifications. There is nothing for it but to accept this great sacrifice like Christians and patriots; for France who has need of it; for God who opens His heaven to the martyrs for all duties.

[1] Epistle to the Corinthians x.

But the terrible trial is also made up of fears that bring to the minds of many—fatal memory of the last war—a menace of civil troubles and invasion.

It was not so long ago that in case of war a general strike, destruction of post-offices, telegraph and telephone-wires, a compulsory check to mobilization was prophesied. Is not there any one so foolish or so worthless as to dream of it now it has come? And, on the other hand, what effect will be produced among the Socialists by the assassination of Jaurès, a frightful crime at any time, but monstrous beyond words at the present moment? How well I understand all that is being done to calm the sorrow of the people! Viviani's proclamation; the President's letter to Mme. Jaurès, and these words of Barrès to his daughter:—

"I loved your father, even when our ideas put us in opposition to each other, and I was obliged to resist the sympathy which drew me towards him. His assassination, just when the union of all Frenchmen is accomplished, causes a national mourning."

Will this union really come to pass, this dreamt-of union, the dream but now of so few amongst us, and which the lenient looked upon as Utopian, the others as treason?

O marvel! it would seem like it, and that the very death of the Socialist Tribune, which might have succeeded in breaking it, may on the contrary

become the shining occasion for its manifestation. At his funeral, no words but those of peace are spoken, and the most eloquent are those of Jouhaux, secretary to the chief revolutionary organization. The man of no country, Hervé, asks to be sent to the Front. One of my friends met the reservist Pataud, of the electricians' strike, carefully guarding a level-crossing near Saint-Cyr. The *Guerre Sociale* preaches internal peace and publishes the portrait of the Curé of Moineville, shot for having warned our soldiers of the approach of the Germans by ringing the alarm-bell: "Help, France! Here is the enemy!" The railway companies take back their dismissed plate-layers; insubordinate, deserter, political prisoner, all pardoned, hasten to their ranks in the Army.

While the Government revokes its last decrees against the Congregations, sisters follow the troops in the direction of the German frontier, and exiled monks re-pass those of Spain, Italy, and Belgium to present themselves at the recruiting-offices. "Yes, monks," exclaims Clemenceau, "monks we hunted away!"

And the old controversialist, moved by this "nobly simple action," rallies Germany for having relied on our quarrels.

I think truly that she had been too well informed, that she had known of our troubles too well, and that she had too well counted on them. What

she did not know was that all that had no hold on the soul of the nation, and that a great shake might, like violent remedies, heal us at one blow.

Where, but a few weeks ago, could be found a more grievous spectacle than the first sittings of the new Chamber? And where, even in turning over the annals of many Parliaments, could be found a more admirable scene than that it offered on the 4th August; listening, silent as a tribunal of history, to the act of accusation drawn up, with proofs in hand, against those who had hurled twenty-five millions of men on to the fields of slaughter! And in this hot-bed of dissensions, quarrels, selfish desires, boundless ambitions, what trace remained of groups, of rivalries, of hates? Unanimous the respect with which the Presidential message was received; unanimous the adhesion to the Chief of the Government and his noble declaration: "It is the liberties of Europe that are being attacked of which France and her allies and friends are proud to be the defenders. . . . France did not wish for the war; since it is forced upon her, she will defend herself. We are without reproach, we shall be without fear. . . ."

And, without debate, with no dissentient voice, all the laws of national defence, with the heavy sacrifices they imply, are at once voted. The night of August 4th, just a hundred and twenty-five years ago, saw the end of Privileges; finer still

this day of August 4th, 1914, which sees the end of our dissensions and our egotisms.

The fact is that we know ourselves no longer; barriers are falling on every side which, both in public and private life, divided us into hostile clans. A head committee is formed to guard the material and moral interests of the country without delay; to it the Government summons, side by side with those most technically competent, a representative of each party and the best known of its adversaries in the past—Briand, Delcassé, Millerand, de Mun, Ribot. In Belgium it is the same, or even better; the Catholic Government elects the chief Socialist Vandervelde as Minister of State to take his seat beside the venerable M. Woeste. With our friends no more than with ourselves, can political divisions reach the sublime level of patriotism.

But where the union seems miraculous is when, at Westminster, the Irish Nationalists declare that Great Britain may recall its troops from their island, and that they, with the Orange party, will be sufficient to defend it. What a marvellous power of fusion does the furnace of war possess!

It is the same in private life, as I said. The relations between citizens are transformed. In the squares, in the streets, in the trains, outside the stations, on the thresholds of houses, each accosts the other, talks, gives news, exchanges impressions; each feels the same anxiety, the same hopes, the

same wish to be useful, the same acceptance of the hardest sacrifices. Even the children say: "Papa is gone; he went to the War to prevent the Germans doing us harm."

The old proudly enumerate the sons, the nephews, the sons-in-law, the grandsons they have with the Colours; their own age prevents them from going, so they have enlisted in the Civic Guard. The women talk of the anxiety they are feeling for the dear absent ones, of the applications they have made to be admitted as hospital nurses. They tell us familiarly of the precautions against famine they are taking, their fear that milk may fail for the quite little ones; above all, of the possible invasion.

For, next to the field of battle where the men they love are slain, what is most horrible for women in war is the idea of falling into the hands of the enemy soldiers; the thought that in the absence of husband, brother or son, the house may be invaded, the home outraged by victorious brutes.

A woman of the people, to whom I was speaking of the imminence of the War a few days ago, astonished me by her calmness, all the more because she was aware that her husband would go amongst the first. The explanation was not long delayed.

"Happily," she said to me, "Serbia is far from here!"

When she understood that there was a question of a repetition—no doubt with better chances,

but perhaps on the same site—the terrible duel of '70, she quickly changed her note : " Oh ! Monsieur, the Prussians here ! "

August 6th.

They are not here yet. Neither from within nor without do things take the same turn as in the Summer of 1870.

While our mobilization goes on with the most irreproachable coolness, calmness and order, Germany, who wished to take us by surprise, in the execution of her principal plan comes up against a moral and material obstacle which was the last to be expected. Her famous sudden attack is transformed into a sudden check. By one action she turns against herself the human race and the first chances of the struggle. She begins the war by a crime against a people's rights and by a military loss. The violation of Belgian neutrality and the attack upon Liége may bring about—O justice of history and Providence !—the fall of the German Empire ; a fine opportunity for that great law which makes the crime bring forth its own punishment to manifest itself.

The occupation of Luxemburg had given me a false joy ; hearing of it about five o'clock on Sunday at the Meudon station, where M. Lasies, our neighbour, had already brought the news, I had rejoiced over it as over a great victory, seeing in it the

certain end of the English hesitations and the pledge of universal sympathy.

The news on Monday morning did not wholly justify my hopes, and I spent an anxious day.

Now, when the declaration of War between France and Germany was inevitable and might be made at any moment, England was still silent. I knew on good authority what distress the silence of the Government in London had caused our official world towards the end of the preceding week, and I was waiting, as I had never waited for a political decision, for the declaration promised at Westminster for the afternoon of that day. That declaration, upon which was hung, so to speak, the beating of my French heart and my ancient attachment to Great Britain, was, thank God, going to be such as I wished; but I was not to know it till the morrow.

What I did learn that same evening was the ultimatum of Germany to Belgium, the answer of our high-spirited neighbours, and the invasion of their territory. So then there might ensue the crushing arrival of the enemy on our Northern frontier, a Prussian invasion on the side where we were the least prepared to repel it? No doubt England must now decide, for the sake of her own vital interests as much as for respect for her signature; no doubt the final chances of the struggle were in our favour. But, for the present, what evils awaited us and what weeks of horrors were

to pass over our poor country! That night I slept even less than on the preceding ones.

Oh! the sudden changes of fortune and of our feeble minds in these stupendous days! From the deepest anxiety we have leapt to the highest hopes. The two days of the 4th and 5th August which witness the confirmation of the glorious unity of all the French, tell us, too, one after the other, of the admirable resistance of the Belgians, and the ultimatum, shortly followed by the declaration of war, of England to the German Empire.

The little Belgian army stops the Barbarians and makes them retreat.

The Barbarians! formerly that name hurt me when I read it in our newspapers and I thought it a polemical insult; but events prove that it said none too much.

What other people in the world would behave like them, would invade peaceable neighbours, would slay them by thousands for the crime of fidelity to honour and duty? And among the four signatures that guaranteed neutrality, stands, dishonoured for ever, the signature of the King of Prussia! Can you deny it, William the poet, William the mystic, or William the actor? And do you believe that, were you victorious, that infamous perjury would quit your name in the pages of History?

Victorious! That name is not for him, but for

the King of the Belgians, the modest, brave, loyal Sovereign of a small nation of honest folk whom the sense of their rights and of their duty suddenly turned into heroes, stronger in their forty thousand than a hundred and fifty thousand Germans, and more skilful in the business of war than the so-called heirs of Moltke. From the forts of Liége is hurled a little stone that strikes the Teutonic giant on the forehead, and if he is not, like Goliath, thrown at once to the ground, at least he is humbled in a fashion that nothing will efface.

And while, giddy with the blow, he stops short and tries to recover himself, two hundred thousand Davids arise in the Belgian land, ready to die for her if it must be, but confident in their claim and the efficacy of their appeal: "Help us, France Help us, England! They want to murder us!"

Only those who have never seen the land of Belgium close will be astonished. I had been summoned there this very year, at the beginning of March, to discuss the latest problems of education. I never found an audience more open to generous ideas; to listen to a speech on a technical subject of pedagogy the crowd was so great that the lecture had to be given twice. And the men I met, in the world of letters as in that of the Government, left on me such an impression of moral worth and largeness of view, that neither their way of acting nor their way of speaking can now surprise me

The Ministers I saw there were bound to answer the demand of William II as they have done, in words and by conduct for ever worthy of human admiration.

7th August.

The marvellous resistance of the Belgians continues, and so much is already gained that Germany has suffered a delay of some days. If Liége falls to-day—how gloriously!—the enemy will find in front of him Namur, with the same Belgian army, maybe augmented by the first troops coming from France, and, who knows? from England.

I learnt last night that the English, though it is not reported, disembarked two days ago. General French will be able to lead all the more men because the Great Island has no need of a guard at home, Lord Kitchener having yesterday called for the raising of 500,000 men.

Such a Secretary of War in London, such a General on the Continent, and everything agreed upon beforehand in concert with our Staff! No, Great Britain does not only bring us absolute security by sea, she gives us on land, too, help which is already valuable, and which will continually grow more so.

Long live the country of my preference! *Hurrah for Old England!*

England did her best to avert the catastrophe; Sir Edward Grey has just proved it, documents in

hand, with a frankness at which crafty Germany could not afford to smile. So much did England wish for peace, that, by a sort of double-dealing, excusable if it ever were, she at the same time made the Germans fear to have her against them, and the French that they would have to go on without her. She desired peace because of her horror of the miseries of war. Now that she wills war for the sake both of honour and interest, she will go on to the end; she will not stop short of victory, and her victory will be linked with ours. She will no more yield to William II than she yielded to Napoleon; but, as Mr. Asquith said, this time there is no Napoleon.

8th August.

I went this morning to the Pavillon de Bellevue, where a hospital has been established by French ladies. The devotion of the organizers of this and all other similar works—the *Union des Femmes de France, Association des Dames françaises, Société de Secours aux blessés militaires*—is known to all; what is perhaps less known is how it promotes other personal and humble acts of devotion.

While these ladies are talking things over, two women of the people, or of the middle-class, come in, one quite young, the other old but still hale.

"Mesdames, here is our name and address. We are both at your disposal for cooking or any work you like."

"You know," says the Secretary, "that nobody receives a salary? We give nothing but food and a bed."

"That doesn't matter, Madame. I waited on the wounded in '70. There's no need to be paid, so long as one is kept. We have even got some beds at home if they would be of any use."

The Curé of Bellevue, who has the best right to it, has kept for himself the Chaplaincy of this hospital; he has promised me another, and the Curé of Meudon too. The kindness of my colleagues will be pleasant to me; deprived of their curates by the mobilization, they have received the offer of my small services in a very fraternal spirit.

Nevertheless, I think it is as well to go to see the Bishop of Versailles; a visit to Mgr. Gibier always sends one away with a braver spirit. When I arrive, he is taking counsel with the Curés of his town. While I am waiting, the servant first, and then an old priest, ask me if it is true that William is already asking for peace. I explain to them the absurdity of such a rumour; no doubt it arises from the fact that his Army before Liége has, as will be known to-morrow, proposed an armistice to bury their dead. That is the sort of news in war-time; no doubt I shall hear presently in the city others scarcely less probable—that eight hundred Uhlans have passed the Chantiers

station, prisoners sent to Brest, and that the French, after a fine battle, have entered Mulhouse. How quickly one believes what one wishes for!

As soon as the council meeting ends, the Bishop receives me. As usual, he is full of life and spirit. After he has willingly given me permissions and powers for any contingency, we talk a little; we rejoice, in spite of our horror of war, that this at least promises so well for our arms. We speak of the Belgians, those perfect Catholics, those model patriots; of the English, "my friends," whose intervention gives final assurance of our success; of the French more especially, whose zeal and discipline and religion have been so rapidly restored by a common ideal—this astonishes us less than others; we are old friends of our democracy, and maybe more mindful, perhaps in a spirit of compensation, of its good qualities than of its faults and errors.

The offices of religion, we joyfully declare, will be better looked after in the camps than in the parishes. Not only there will be at the front titular Chaplains and their assistants, but a third part of the Clergy is under arms. Seminarist-soldiers are now priest-soldiers; and Rome, like a prudent mother, has withdrawn all the censures aimed at ministers of peace who are forced to give death instead.

Who could refuse the Sacraments offered in these terms:—

"It's getting hot, comrade. If you like, I can give you absolution."

One would think oneself back again in the days of chivalry, the days of the gallant Roland and Archbishop Turpin.

What a clergy it will be that returns from the War! Decimated, even then its influence for good will be ten times greater. Even its going has already had its effect.

"I'm not in too great a hurry to reorganize parochial life," Mgr. Gibier confides to me. "All the worse for those who want for Masses on the first Sundays; they will perceive that M. le Curé is gone to the War."

What fine sermons will be those that were not preached! I am tempted to say.

Versailles, that noble and sleepy town, is no longer recognizable; it is a vast camp, one of our chief points of military concentration. Every day thousands of reservists—peasants, workmen, bourgeois—arrive; every day thousands, equipped, and with fine soldier-like bearing, leave, and the transition is not wanting in picturesqueness; you ought to see this crowd of brave fellows, half-civilian, half-soldier, in a blouse, a great-coat, but all capped with the *képi*. This variety does not prevent them from briskly setting about their military business, grooming horses, driving the wagons, guarding the munitions.

Near the railway stations, regiments already formed are awaiting to depart; elsewhere, and notably in the enormous barracks and along the solemn avenues leading to the Castle, there seems a confusion, which in reality is order unrestrained, where each one is trying to do his best, to instruct and help his neighbour, the officers mixing with the men and being consulted by them as if they were fathers or elder brothers. A friend of mine, a reservist officer, never ceases praising the spirit of the men; no one grumbles, nor grudges his trouble, nor grieves at having left everything; each one accepts his task because he understands the necessity for it. The only mischance of the mobilization, the only point where the Staff find themselves out of their reckoning is that the average of absentees they expected has not appeared, no one having sought for pretexts for eluding the duty of patriotism.

Here we have not to do, as in Germany, with an army that marches under orders; it is a people conscious of its honour and its interests, defending itself against aggressors, determined to get rid once for all of intolerable neighbours, and which, free from the ambition of conquest, seeks but to take back its own property, its Alsace-Lorraine, and to lay down, for itself and for others, the lasting conditions of a truly pacific peace.

In this crisis, the French nation comes out in-

finitely superior to what was said of it, and to what it thought of itself; everywhere are to be seen voluntary self-sacrifice and spontaneous discipline, those two signs of the highest education. Witness as I am, day by day and in many details, of what is said and what is done among the people and other classes, by those who go and those who stay, I grieve that I cannot proclaim my admiration loudly enough; I should like to possess an almost universal repute, so that I might demonstrate to all foreigners how worthy we are of the sympathy which they bestow upon us, how right is their faith in our compatriots and our Allies!

However rash this declaration at the outset of the War may appear, I assert that to-day France finds herself under such conditions that there is no doubt of her final victory.

9th and 10th August.

So it was really true that report of the day before yesterday, too good to be believed!

The French Army re-enters Alsace and our tricolour floats over Mulhouse. If one may judge by our emotion, our trembling, our tears, what joyful excitement must be down there! How little hold those frontier-posts had on the sacred soil! and in what a glorious fashion the Battle of Altkirch begins the era of deliverance! About equal in numbers, an intrenched brigade, therefore three times the stronger,

is hunted out by us ; it flies aghast, and the coming of night alone preserves what was left of it from destruction at our hands. It was while pursuing it that we reached and crossed Mulhouse. But for the darkness, but for the prudent order of those in command which was at last heard, where might our troops have stopped ?

I learn the news as I am going to say Mass and can't help telling it first to the devout congregation.

" All our feelings ought to be made holy," was about what I said ; " and this is one to reckon with ; the French Army is in Alsace, has retaken Altkirch, occupies Mulhouse. With our prayers for the Armies of France may therefore already be mingled the first acts of gratitude. Let us pray that God will continue to protect us. Let us pray for the soldiers who die, our own first of all, but also, as befits Christians, those against whom we are fighting."

The occupation of Mulhouse took place at five o'clock on Friday ; how then could it be talked about in Versailles at three and in Paris at noon ? Of course there is the difference in time between the places, but it does not give such an interval as this ; and no doubt the plan of those in command might be known a little while before being put into practice ; but it could be but a plan, at the very utmost a hope. Doesn't that look like a good example of presentiment ? Time and space are full of mystery ; more than once their barriers

between those linked by love have seemed to be broken through, and things beyond and beforehand have been seen. Presentiments! Napoleon III, on the point of joining the Army of the Rhine on July 28th, 1870, felt such a one, that his melancholy eyes, despite himself, filled with tears; the Sovereign of August, 1914, that is the people of France, feels such as lighten all sacrifices, and reason is in agreement with heart. Different results of different policies: the Emperor, at the last moment, saw his dreams of Austro-Italian help and German dissensions fade away; the Republic sees the hoped-for support of England added to the certain alliance of Russia, as well as the unexpected co-operation of the Belgians; and on the contrary it is Germany that loses one of its two Allies. And while order and calmness are all on our side, the enemy seems seized with that intoxication of pride with which we were infatuated then.

But have I let myself go too far in optimism, and putting aside the evils inseparable from War, is there really no dark cloud on our horizon? Truth to tell, I can see but two, and the first was quickly dispersed. The second makes me more anxious.

During the first few days, the popular imagination nearly went astray on the track of suspicion and absurd reprisals. I don't speak of the dread of spies; that was but too well justified, and if they were often seen where they did not exist, on the

other hand there existed many where no one guessed.

What was to be deplored was attacks on establishments which belonged, or were supposed to belong, to German subjects. The sacking of the Maggi dairies by some hundreds of hooligans was a blot on the fine uniformity of our conduct during those first days of agitation. Explanations and the just rigours of the law, thank God, soon settled that matter, but it was a very bad departure, and as for me, I found it impossible to undeceive the people here, according to whom three hundred children in Boulogne-sur-Seine had died, poisoned by foreign milk. As a last argument I asked a labourer who had come back from there if he had seen them. He said, yes!

These disorders, thanks be to God, did not go far and nothing is left of them; police, civic guards, councils of war, restrictions on the sale of alcohol, completed the work of good sense and patriotism; internal peace was never more profound.

My real black spot is therefore not that; it exists where I fear there will be few of us to perceive it—in the imminence of a Japanese intervention.

"Well, but won't this intervention be in our favour, considering the English alliance?"

That is just why I am anxious; I fear it may make us lose the precious sympathy of the United States. It is well known that between them and the Empire of the Rising Sun there exists an almost inveterate

opposition of social and economic interests; I saw it with my own eyes on the American shores of the Pacific Ocean, and I attempted in my small way to make it known. Others with much more authority have spoken of it in the same way, and an Italian review has just reproduced the prophecy, or rather the prevision, of the Japanese General, Nogi, in which he declares that there will be two more great wars; one in Europe by France and her Allies against Germany, which will be vanquished; the other between Japan and the United States on the waters and shores of the immense Pacific. May God preserve us from seeing one of these plagues precipitate the other, and, lightning attracting lightning, the conflagration spread over the whole terrestrial globe!

II

14th–19th August.

My four days of silence do not mean that there has been no news since 10th August, but that the time has been wasted in business, weariness and enervating expectations. Grave as are the events each day tells of yesterday, one guesses that those of the present hour are still more so and foresees that to-morrow may tell of still greater. At times the pen is discouraged by excess of emotion ; at others one must yield to the need for expression.

During these last days England and France have both broken with Austria, but at such a time as this and considering the actual situation, that is a mere trifle ! The news from Alsace and Belgium is quite otherwise absorbing. Liége is in the hands of the Germans, but its forts are still untaken and continue to interrupt their advance. Will they get through nevertheless ? In any case it will not be without enormous losses, nor now quickly enough to surprise the Allies, for the French have arrived (in what numbers we do not know), and no doubt the English, too. What mystery and suspense ! So many armies in presence of each other, going to kill each other, perhaps doing so already ! And how great

the stakes of this formidable fight! Either our entry into Aix-la-Chapelle, and the invasion of Prussia; or the descent of the Germans on Brussels, and on our own Northern Frontier. . . .

In Alsace, at least, at the other end of this 360-mile line of battle, it seems there is a clearer view, and our success there seems certain. If our entry into Mulhouse was only a sign of hope, a means of frightening the enemy and upsetting his plans, we keep on in Altkirch and take methodically one by one the passes of the Vosges, the villages, the towns of strategical importance. Already we are even beginning to descend the heights and overthrow everything that opposes our advance across the plains. Those little *Alpins* of ours are rough huntsmen and they haven't belied their name; the foreign birds, the German game that infest the forests of Alsace can't withstand their guns.

Thus begins the realization of the vision my tear-filled eyes saw nearly twenty years ago, when, one summer Sunday in the Church at Orbey after the recitation of the Rosary in our own language, I heard the young girls of Alsace sing to a French air the truly appropriate Psalm: *Levavi oculos meos in montes unde veniet auxilium mihi:* "I have lifted my eyes to the hills whence cometh my help."

Exactly forty-four years ago, and exactly at the same date—between the 14th and 19th of August,

the French and German troops were at grips as they are to-day. But, thank God, with what a difference!

Then we were leaving Alsace, which now we are about to re-enter; then we were leaving shut up in Metz our finest army; now bold and valiant men, supported by strong reserves, are everywhere victoriously withstanding the enemy on a front of 250 miles, extending from Belfort to Liége.

The most egotistic and incapable of all the generals half-heartedly engaged the enemy in the Battles of Borny, Gravelotte and Saint-Privat, on the pretence of getting out of Metz, and when they were half won, he fell back upon the town. To-day, commanders, whose intelligence equals their courage, do their duty severally under discipline, in silence and self-abnegation, their very names unknown by those for whom they are sacrificing themselves. Who won the victory at Dinant? Who re-took Altkirch, the Passes of Alsace? Who directed the slow and glorious march towards Strasbourg? No one knows. France holds on in Belgium, on the Meuse; France re-occupies the Eastern slope of the Vosges, debouches from la Seille, retakes Morhange, occupies Dieuze and Château-Salins: that is all, and it is enough. It is not the affair of a man, but of a people.

20th August.

Still we have little news from Belgium, and I

don't much like what we had this morning. Very important German forces have crossed the Meuse between Namur and Liége; the Belgian Government, as a precautionary measure, have retired to Antwerp with the Royal Family, but the King himself is with the army.

The German flood, arrested for a fortnight by the dyke of Belgian breasts, has it seems begun to inundate the territory of our heroic neighbours. Repulsed as it will be by them, by the English, by us, what ruin it will spread, and how grievous it will be to see it soil the dear and pleasant city of Brussels! And besides, though it may be of no military importance, the capture of an open capital does not fail to exercise a moral effect; the jeopardized prestige of the German forces will be for the time restored in the eyes of spectators at a distance.

Finally, Brussels is not far from the French frontier, poorly fortified on that side. This is what comes of believing in the honour of a King of Prussia and that he would never violate a neutrality guaranteed by his own signature! Happily, we have had time to make ready, and Germany will find living fortresses on her path.

The day is given over to sadness. From Rome we hear that Pius X is dying. Already weakened by age and his constant anxieties; easily moved by great emotions, the common Father of the faithful could not get over the grievous news of these

last days. How sorrowful a reign has been his, and how well one understands his tears, his refusals, his forced acceptance, over the choice of the last Conclave!

"The state of the Pope leaves no room for hope," says the *Echo de Paris*; and in that paper, where M. de Mun is a daily writer, the news takes up only a paragraph. Strange times, indeed, when the imminent death of a Pope scarcely attracts attention. When Leo XIII departed, I was in England; the Protestant papers talked of nothing but him. When Pius X was elected, I was in America; the press was full of the doings of the Conclave. But whether the world concerns itself about it or not; whether Europe be in peace or at war, a Pope dies, a Pope succeeds him; the Church, grave and serene, pursues her destinies. And when the nations pay more heed to the Gospel she proclaims, we shall no longer see what we see now.

21*st August.*

Pius X is dead. However absorbed in other matters, the world's opinion makes momentary reverence before him whom for eleven years it has respected for his great virtues; it finds time to admire the will which leaves to the sisters of a Pope only a modest pension to enable them to keep themselves; and it says to itself that he had the right to impose disinterestedness on others since he practised it himself to this high degree.

One wonders who will be his successor. Ferrata, the prudent diplomatist? Della Chiesa, the friend of Rampolla? Maffi, the learned Archbishop of Pisa? These names and the few others that are mentioned with them—Pompili, Gasparri, are all of good augury; and the investigations of the Sacred College, thank God, give evidence of setting towards a wise and opportune choice. Spiritual peace-making hangs upon it, and perchance also, in some measure, the shortening of the actual war. Who knows if the Sovereign Pontiff or the President of the United States may not be taken as Arbitrator of Peace?

The Head of Christianity, whoever he may be, can never be at war with any one; as to the Head of the greatest of Democracies, I trust it will be the same with him. And yet, I must own, that I had an instant's dread when I read Japan's ultimatum to Germany. It is equivalent to a rupture. The siege of Tsing-Tao will soon follow, and the seizure of all the Peninsula of Kiao-Chau. What will the United States say to that? Let us hope that wise England will arrange matters with her Ally. Anyhow here is the War carried into the Far-East; where won't it extend to? The Balkans, Italy, can't well escape.

Some morning we must expect to read that the planet Mars is mobilizing and the Moon has declared her neutrality!

24th August.

The last two days I have written nothing, having been preparing a lecture I had promised the Curé of Meudon. He has got up patriotic meetings in the big hall of his parish for every Sunday evening. Yesterday there were more people there than I had expected. The subject deeply interested the audience; I had to speak of the War near Metz, the siege, the capitulation, the entrance of the Germans, the attitude of Mgr. Dupont des Loges in presence of the victors. The ceremony of the *Souvenir Français* and the protest before the Reichstag evoked much emotion. In the second part of the lecture I was obliged to pause every five minutes because of the tears of the audience and of the lecturer. I came away rather broken-down, but glad to have been able to arouse such sentiments.

The note of hope I gave here and there, especially towards the end, was mingled with a certain anxiety, and was mostly concerned with the final issue of operations. The fact is, one no longer knows what to think. We have re-taken Mulhouse and seem well-established in Haute-Alsace; but the advance into Lorraine has been quickly lost; we were almost at Fenétrange and here we are back at Nancy; the Germans are at Lunéville.

And in Belgium, mon Dieu, what is happening? The great battle has been going on since yesterday. How many wounded, how many dead each minute

may bring! And what tremendous stakes! Either the Germans driven back by us and their defeat completed by our Allies at Antwerp, when it would become possible to foresee the near ending of the War at the cost of least evil; or the Germans victorious, France invaded and the War prolonged under frightful conditions till the far-off arrival of the Russians.

Unable to wait here for news I went to Paris about three o'clock. There was great excitement on the boulevards, and I was astonished at seeing so many people there. But there was order and almost silence everywhere; the newspapers were being read and re-read as they followed each other every few minutes without reporting anything decisive. The battle was proceeding, that was all that was known for certain. From Serbia and Russia the good news was confirmed; Austria appeared to be already in a state where she could do no harm; the Cossacks were seizing Eastern Prussia and taking the road to Berlin. So much the better! so much the better! But our chief interest is fixed otherwhere; our whole mind reaches out towards Charleroi, the entre of the great encounter. And we can know nothing of the issue! And we must sleep in this horrible uncertainty!

25th August.

Sleep! Yes, five minutes occasionally, worn-out by fatigue and enervation!

And by morning one is at the station to wait the arrival of the papers:

. . . *our offensive in Belgium has not attained its end. Our covering army is intact.*

These euphemisms are enough to make all plain. It takes an effort to read in these disheartening terms the details the Government thinks right to give.

What troubles me most is the care that is taken to re-assure us. No doubt the account as a whole is correct: "In a general way we have kept full liberty to make use of our network of railways, and all the seas are open to us for provisioning. Our operations have made it possible for Russia to go into action and to penetrate into the heart of Eastern Prussia."

But we are beaten, we are in retreat, we are invaded; Germany recovers her prestige, and ours, which had re-appeared, is lessened in the eyes of the nations; the enemy's plan, after a delay of fifteen days, will be put into execution; and final success, even if it remains probable, grows farther off and we are separated from it by awful trials. Read under this impression, the official *communiqués*, in their brevity, seem to me big with the worst menaces. I say Mass overwhelmed with grief, praying for the numberless dead, imploring the Divine Pity for France, and begging that we may at least profit from our misfortunes; and at the time for the act of thanksgiving I recite the *Miserere*.

As I leave the Chapel I make an effort to avoid frightening those who question me, and that revives my own spirits somewhat. I re-read the *communiqués* of the War with more calmness and attention. They show evidently that our offensive has failed and that we must mourn for the hopes it had raised; but, after all, it is not a disaster. Our troops keep their morale and have fallen back in good order on foreseen positions. The enemy has gained no positive advantage by his success; beaten he would have lost all; victorious he gains scarcely anything. Already there is talk of recommencing the fight at the time that suits us, that is to say, soon, and under more advantageous conditions, please God! And then, it is not correct to speak of invasion. What was seen at Roubaix-Tourcoing was only a mass of cavalry; the Germans are prodigal of Uhlans; their patrols are meant especially to frighten. Don't let us be frightened.

Where it is impossible to find comfort is in the number of dead and wounded. "Our losses are considerable." One knows what that means. And that the German Army has suffered as many does not make our mourning less. In Germany, too, there are mothers, wives and children. . . .

The duel between our African troops and the Prussian Guards was heroic; heroism that means at once valour and carnage.

Where is my godson and cousin, the sharpshooter

from Constantine? Where, too, is Dr. P——, assistant surgeon to the 1st regiment of Cuirassiers; and what shall I say to his wife, who is dangerously ill? Where are the many other relations and friends whom I saw depart so full of enthusiasm?

And I am not among the most unfortunate; more to be pitied are those fathers and mothers who have one or more sons out there; those wives with young children awaiting tidings that may turn them into widows and orphans.

26th August.

In fact our Army is holding out; the Anglo-French troops have kept the adversary in check while gaining the positions assigned to them, and already on our right to the East of the Meuse, we shall have taken the offensive. The spirit of our men is in nowise weakened and persists even amongst the wounded. It is not only the papers that say so; friends who have seen some of them unanimously confirm it. On their bed of suffering the dear heroes retain the fire of battle in their eyes, and the fever in their limbs is less intense than that of their souls. One only wish they express—to be quickly healed so as to be at it again.

But the heart-rending thing is to have to evacuate the re-conquered Alsace. Poor Mulhouse! Twice in fifteen days the rapture of liberation, and twice the horror of falling back under the yoke. A more

important concern requires it. The fate of France, and thereby that of Alsace, must be decided in the North; the whole of our force must gather there. So be it! But even so, the popular instinct is right when it makes me hear all about me: "If there are not enough soldiers to protect Alsace, why are men being sent back?"

And it is true that there are numbers coming back against their will after wasting long days in country towns whither the mobilization had carried them. Both good sense and courage would have made them prefer the Front. What can they do at home with no work and awaiting a sudden recall? There is something difficult to understand about this.

28th August.

The news—anyhow the official news—is not altogether bad. Between the Vosges and Nancy, as well as on the Saint-Dié side, we have the advantage, and on the Meuse we have repulsed some German attacks.

But on the North, to our Left, the English, despite their heroism, have had to give up some ground before the crushing superiority in numbers. But Longwy has surrendered, and though it is a glorious achievement for a little unimportant town to have held out, defended by only one battalion, for twenty-four days, it is all the same a proof that the Germans

are masters about there, that they are nearing Stenay, one of the points they planned to pass.

And for them to pass is to make for Paris, to prepare to invest it. The papers don't yet talk of it, but the idea is making its way into even the best-balanced minds. It is evident that the preparations for defence are being hastened, and every day sees the entrenchments strengthened.

It is sensible from any point of view; but to have come to this, in spite of so many favourable circumstances, in spite of all the time wasted in Belgium by Germany, and principally no doubt, because we have no equipment ready for the hundred-thousands of men who want to go, is, let us own, a little hard.

III

29th August.

This is my first joy since the beginning of the War (I don't count the pleasure, too dearly atoned for, of the fugitive success in Alsace): I am going to be useful in some way! It was about time; I was fretting, like so many others, at having nothing to do.

Yesterday was one of the worst days; hardly any news, and about me growing anxiety and almost distraction. The heads of the School where I say Mass determined to flee into the South; friends I was to spend two days with beyond Versailles were packing up to escape the possible approach of Uhlans. In the afternoon I had been to visit a dying woman; I had once more seen at close quarters what death is, and I had wondered if it were possible that death was being dealt out purposely day by day to tens and tens of thousands. It was almost more than I could bear, and I felt the coming on of that anaesthesia which is our refuge from the excess of moral sufferings as from those of the body.

And, behold, as I got home about six o'clock, I find

a card from M. Charles N—— and a letter from the Archbishop's House, asking me to let them know as soon as possible if I would accept the post of Chaplain to the Military Hospital the Americans have just opened at Neuilly-sur-Seine.

If I would consent to serve the cause of God and France by caring for the souls of the wounded, and fulfil such a mission among my friends the Americans ?

For fear a telegram should be too much delayed in transmission, I catch the first train to take my own answer. M. N—— is not at home, but his wife is to be back at eight o'clock and she knows all about the matter. As I have always found with Americans, confidence and sympathy came with the first words. So far we don't know much about what is to be done, or how ; but we agree on everything beforehand, and it is arranged that Mme. N—— shall convey my acceptance to the Archbishop's House to-morrow morning.

She tells me that she has just come from the Gare du Nord, where unhappy Belgians, women, children and old men, that the German barbarians have chased away before them, are being welcomed and comforted. The noble-hearted American still shudders over what she has seen and heard ;—bombardment of open towns ; villages pillaged and burnt ; mine-shafts shut down over living workmen ; young girls carried off by the soldiery ;

women, children and old men put in front of the lines to be fired on; mutilations, rapes, murders;—and these not as an exception, not the act of certain brutes let loose, but as the rule almost everywhere outside the big cities, and as a deliberate system of terrorization!

30th August.

A sad Sunday. If we are holding our own in Lorraine and on the Mézières side, the Germans are making a great advance on the left in the region of the Aisne towards La Fère. That is the wording of the *communiqué*. But it does not add that La Fère is half-way to Paris, and I hear from a private source that the Prefecture of Laon is moved to Château-Thierry.

What a great part of our territory is thus already invaded, and how many poor wretches are already suffering from the irruption of the savage hordes!

Paris is making ready for the possible, one might say probable, investment. I dare not dwell upon a consoling idea that came to me to-night and that I have just heard expressed by others—that our retreat may be a feint to draw the fight where we wish it to take place.

In any case, we are preparing for the worst. I have heard it said that the Government will retire to Bordeaux; that is a little far as a beginning. But I know for certain that one of my friends, a

custodian at the Louvre Museum, is working at making safe the most precious objects of his collection. And then there is an official order for the evacuation of the military zone of Paris after a wait of four days.

For the last time I have celebrated Mass before our little group of the *Institut Notre-Dame*. The Mistresses, with the staff and the few children left with them, start for Royan this evening. I had myself advised the exodus ; one can't leave Frenchwomen exposed to a meeting with men from the other side of the Rhine.

After the Gospel, I spoke a few words of farewell, recommended the leaving it all to God, begged prayers for the election of the Pope, for France, for the relations and friends we each have on the field of battle. Amongst the congregation there were wives and mothers. I did what I could not to be too pathetic, but there were tears all the same. I think we all prayed well.

Every day increases the troubles of our compatriots or allies, and at the same time augments the menace of our personal misfortunes. Ordinary existence is already torn up by the roots ; all around us things keep changing from hour to hour, and one can never foresee what one will be doing, or where one will be next day. For instance, I don't know if I shall say Mass to-morrow at Meudon, at Bellevue or in Paris, or whether I shall sleep at

home or in a Military Hospital. And I am writing these notes at noon, in Paris, at the house of some Americans who had asked me to come at eleven o'clock. I have known them only two days and find it quite natural to wait for them till lunch-time, supposing that they return. Everything else is left to chance.

My new friends come back at one o'clock; with them is a young girl who saw the English Ambassador this morning. In giving her the latest news he could not restrain his emotion. The English are in retreat towards Compiègne; the left of the Allies is giving way before the irresistible pressure of the masses of the enemy. On the other hand, it seems that General Pau with the Alsatian troops is arriving on this unlucky Left; they were seen passing Fontainebleau. But pessimism is to the fore.

At the Invalides Station, where I go to take the train back to Meudon, there are interminable queues waiting before the inquiry-offices and those for the issue of tickets for the main lines. In the same way, at Montparnasse, the police had difficulty in keeping order amongst a frightened crowd. Every one wanted to get away and had left it till the last minute. One of my friends, who wanted to travel to the South with her children by a somewhat direct train, asked for tickets on Friday, and could only obtain them for the following Thursday.

The suburban line, luckily, is less crowded, and I

arrive in time—five o'clock—to listen to General Canongé's lecture on "1870 and 1914," in the same Hall in which I spoke on Sunday.

The comparison, thank God, is more or less reassuring, especially in the matter of Alliances and the moral condition of the country. As for the material preparations and the management of the first operations, discreet critics, for those who understand, did not fail to mitigate the reasons for confidence.

2nd September; the anniversary of Sedan.

In spite of official anxiety to conceal everything from us, what one gets to know, daily increases our uneasiness.

False reports of successes by their falseness only increase the effect of real failures that have to be subsequently recognized. On Sunday evening, I was very far from being in a state of excessive optimism. Coming back at nine o'clock from seeing a family in confusion who had asked my advice, I hear in the street that we had won a most important battle at La Fère; the German Right Wing had been surrounded; 60,000 Bavarians had given themselves up. As I refuse to believe this, they tell me of the people just come back from Versailles, who brought the news, and, in spite of the lateness of the hour, I go to see them, with excuses for my intrusion.

They say they are only too glad to assure me of the truth of the report.

Doubt is no longer possible. At the station, in the trains as well as in the town itself, nothing but songs of victory is to be heard; and, still more, at the Satory Camp, where people are embracing each other for joy, the Regiments ready to start have received the counter-order. A soldier of the Flying-Corps I met later was just as certain; there too, the order to be ready to start for Lyons had been countermanded. An officer I spoke to shared the general belief, although, as he said, there was no official *communiqué* yet.

But there was one next morning that I did not fail to go to the station to look at. It shyly announced that the Allies were still falling back to the line of the Seine, the Oise and the Haute-Meuse.

The afternoon of that same day, Monday, 31st August, under the goad of too great anxiety unable to work or to keep still, I go back to Paris without any definite object. Paris wears her accustomed air, which does not appeal to my feelings; this lovely Summer-end on the Terrace of the Tuileries, the Place de la Concorde, the Champs-Élysées, offends the emotions of the hour.

I think I will go to see Lady A—— and the work-room she has set up in her house, in the Avenue Montaigne, with the double object of furnishing the hospitals with linen and giving work to women

who are in need of it. She is employing her time like a good Frenchwoman, while her husband is employing his like a good Irishman in encouraging the enlistment of his compatriots. I tell her of my visit to M. X——, with whom she is well acquainted, and as I had found him far from well, we decide to go together to hear how he is.

Thank God, we find him quite recovered, so need have no scruple in enjoying one of those conversations in which one does not know which most to admire, his faith or his good sense, his wit or his cordiality. To-day he appears to me a little pessimistic about what is happening, and the events that brought on the War. But Lady A—— and I insist on the good sides of the situation, especially on the fact that the retreat of the forces on the North is more than made up for by the firm stand of the Eastern Army, in Alsace, Lorraine, and along the Meuse. We are interrupted by the old maid-servant announcing two ladies of the Red Cross.

"I thought you were at the Front," says M. X——

"The Front, like us, is getting nearer to Paris."

"Things are going badly in the East, then?"

"Yes, very badly."

And they tell us how, with the wounded they had just installed, they had been forced to leave Rethel before the German inroad.

"The Germans at Rethel! We thought they were before Namur."

"Before Namur? They must be occupying Reims by this time, and in a week they will be before Paris."

We feel the victims of a horrible dream. The Germans at Rethel, at Reims? But what about the Meuse? What about Maubeuge? What about the necessary arrest of the second German flood that ought at any cost to have been prevented from joining that coming from Charleroi?

It must mean then the invasion of the whole North and the whole North-East, the impotent retreat of our troops.

"Our troops," answer the messengers of disaster, "have been in retreat for the last week. From Dinant to Reims our soldiers have fled before the German pursuit, and we don't know where they will stop, except for the great number of those who fall from exhaustion along the roads. They die, actually die, of fatigue and hunger."

"You are sure—you are quite sure?"

"Listen. Yesterday morning at half-past one the tocsin sounded. Startled out of sleep, all the inhabitants of Rethel were ordered to leave the place in two hours, enough time to dress themselves. And a little earlier, at ten o'clock at night, the Superintendent of Police had been arrested, accused of having warned some of the inhabitants to get ready. Old people, the sick, children, the Red Cross with its wounded—received two days before—every-

body was to go, those who could in the train or in carriages, but the greater number on foot. And it is the same all the way from the frontier—all along the roads a fleeing crowd, bewildered, without means, without object, without hope. And from those who have *seen* one hears frightful things. Murders, fires, rapes, mutilations! the enemy no longer seeks to vanquish an army, it wants to annihilate a people. They cut off the right hand of little boys so that they may not carry arms later on; they kill pregnant women to do away with future Frenchmen. On arriving at a village, the soldiers plunder it first of all, then surround it, set fire to the houses all around, shoot or push back into the flames the inhabitants who try to escape; and when neither dwellings nor people are left, they resume their march.[1] And it is a rushing torrent; they finish off their own wounded to avoid delay; they advance by forced marches. Once more we say, in eight days they will be before Paris. . . ."

Even making allowance for the excitement of the two travellers, their words were enough to scare us. The War, the War was all the talk, and it drew nearer; in the shape of these two women in

[1] PS.—This is precisely what is affirmed as to the village of Nomeny, in Meurthe-et-Moselle, in the French Official Report on German atrocities. (See *l'Officiel* of 8th January, 1915).

tragic uniform and witnesses of such horrors it had made its appearance.

We leave this interview in a state of dejection such as we have never yet known, and in which our personal fate is far from holding the first place. Nevertheless it must be thought of.

Lady A—— feels it to be her duty to remain in France and even in Paris: "One doesn't forsake one's mother or one's country in the time of danger," she says. As for me, I express a fear that I shall not be able to take up my post if Paris makes ready for investment and communications are cut off. She offers me a room in her house at any moment that I may find it convenient; and as she is not living there but in a hotel near, she warns her *concierge* to be ready for me at any time.

3rd September.

Half-past ten. I shall not have to take advantage of that kind offer. Last night, just at nine o'clock, a long-delayed telegram asks me to come to the hospital, where they are expecting wounded at any moment. This morning I go to the station to get information. The 11.16 train will probably run, I am told. I have therefore made my preparations, as has also my maid, whose husband is at the War, and who, with her little girl, will go back to her parents. Never has the child enjoyed herself more; every day there has been some commotion or other.

In a quarter of an hour I shall have given the key to a neighbour and left this new house and all I was going to put into it: furniture, books, and souvenirs, the memories and work of a lifetime. If fire or pillage come to it, at fifty-two I shall not commit the folly of setting up house again for what may remain to me of days in so brittle a world, but shall end my days in detachment. God shows us too clearly the nothingness of things, and, were it not for immortality, the nothingness of men.

Departure.

Half-past one. Still at Meudon. I waited for the eleven o'clock train till a quarter-past twelve; the station-master, interrogated, knows no more about it than I do. I decide to go back to the house, where my maid will still have to be for a couple of hours. She improvises from what is left a war-time meal. Still I must get to Neuilly, where my wounded are expecting me. There is no way of getting a carriage; the few horses on hire have been requisitioned. It is impossible to count on the trains; most of them are reserved for the carrying of the troops, the reservists called up, the staff and material of the Gévelot Works, which are going South. The manufacture of arms and powder is being worked at steadily; a special vote has been given for it. For a month past they have been working hard at

it; and the Treaty of Frankfort was signed forty-four years ago!

Two o'clock. I return to my personal history; that is better than recriminations.

Before making up my mind to undertake the journey to Neuilly on foot in the company of a sturdy boy of fourteen who, turn and turn about with me, is to push the wheelbarrow with the luggage, I thought I would make a last attempt on the telephone. For a wonder it was still acting and I got on to M. N—— at once. He will come himself in his motor-car to fetch me at five o'clock. It is all right.

A strange rumour is to be heard at the post-office and in the streets. The Forest of Compiègne is said to be on fire, and an army of 50,000 Germans who had been allowed to get into it on purpose is burnt. And to think that, anyhow for the first moment, I rejoice over the thought of this horrible thing! You criminals who command the Germans, to what will you degrade us by your contempt for the rights of others and your violation of all the laws of war?

Papers I have just bought persistently report the victory of the Russians in Galicia. This seems a more certain thing and the best of news. If this victory is as great a one as is reported, its effects will soon extend to us, and the whole course of the War may be altered by it. Diplomatic reactions

will equal the others, and an Austria vanquished, maybe dismembered, will offer great temptations to our sister Italy.

Four o'clock. My maid has just gone; everything is shut up; I have nothing left but my stylographic pen and my note-book, just sufficient to make a few political notes.

The Government has gone as it had decided some days ago. I knew it on Sunday, though not in its confidence, and the people knew nothing of it. It is incredible how easy it is, when once the papers are controlled by the Government, to deceive public opinion or to keep it in ignorance. What is no less surprising is the value set on this secrecy by the authorities. Yet I notice everywhere that the knowledge of the real state of things gives much better results than does error. It is for ever the mistaken idea of treating men like children and children like imbeciles. Heads of the people and teachers time after time have reason to repent, but they remain incorrigible.

If the idea of the exodus, and the reasons which make it a duty as imperious as grievous, had been gradually made clear to the people, they would not look upon it as an ignominious flight. If they had been told in time and without reserve of the advance of the invader, they would not have learnt it by the sudden arrival of distraught fugitives who infected them with their terror. So far panic grows

but slowly, but that is thanks to the good sense of the greater number of the citizens; the artless precautions of the authorities were more calculated to prepare the way for it. A fine gain in truth by concealing reverses and proclaiming successes! We heard of the lucky fight at Dinant, the entrance into Alsace, the entrance into Lorraine—and then, without transition, here are the Government at Bordeaux and the Germans at Compiègne!

But it is nearly five o'clock; I must get ready. Let us hope all the same that M. N—— will be able to come. My close-shut, empty house won't do for a long stay.

A quarter-past five. No one yet. But the weather is delicious; never was there a more beautiful Summer. Nature insults man; or rather man insults Nature.

At this time yesterday as I went to Clamart, I was walking along the edge of the wood. The light, the shade, the sunshine, the trees, the soft warmth of the air, the distant view of Paris over the Bois de Boulogne and St. Cloud with its green slopes, formed so strong a contrast with human horrors that I felt intoxicated with it, as it were, and could no longer believe in the oppressive realities of the moment; they took on the look of a dream, a wild imagination.

In this dream I saw eight nations, four of which, the greatest in Europe, and the strongest one in Asia,

were already at war, while two or three others still were making ready to join in it. I saw, in all the North and East of France, then on half the vast frontiers dividing Russia, Austria and Germany, battles lasting several days ; battles lasting several weeks, in which millions of men killed each other. I dreamt that New Zealand seized a German island in Oceania, that there was fighting in East Africa, in the Cameroons, in the Congo. I dreamt that Japan bombarded a peninsula in the China sea ; I dreamt that great vessels chased each other across the ocean, that in the North Sea as in the Adriatic whole fleets endeavoured to destroy each other. I dreamt that the days of invasion had come back and were accompanied by destruction, rapes, murders and conflagrations such as had not been seen since the days of Attila. I dreamt that the art-filled Flemish towns had been burnt, that Belgium and Northern France were the prey of hordes of barbarians, and that the same scourge was reaching Paris. And, to crown the wildness of my fancies, I dreamt that, unsatisfied by its fields of carnage, the war had spread even to the sky, and that, from above our heads human science, succeeding at last after so many ages in sailing in the air, sent down from thence deadly engines upon great towns, churches, museums, hospitals, palaces of queens and royal children. . . .

The sound of cannon awoke me from this frightful

dream; they were fired at German aviators who were throwing down bombs on Paris.

Twenty minutes to six. The car does not come. Shall I stay here alone? I will go to look at the aeroplanes, French or German, that are whizzing above the house.

Six o'clock. I hear the horn of the motor-car. There is a ring: it must be for me. M. N—— and another member of the committee take me to the hospital.

IV

NEUILLY,

4th September.

FROM the first everything was less commonplace than at Meudon.

Arriving last night at six o'clock, I am taken to my room. It is magnificent in the matter of height and width, but there is nothing in it except panes in the windows; the door, supposed to be glazed, has not yet got its glass.

Presently they will bring a bed, and there is a washing-stand in the neighbourhood. With newspapers on the floor I can unpack what is essential from my bag. In war-time. . . .

At dinner I hear of the election of Benedict XV and confirmation of the great defeat of the Austrians. Two pieces of good news. The friendship of Rampolla guarantees the intelligence, wisdom and piety of the new Head of the Church. I shall be able to love my Pope.

This morning's papers tell us nothing of the War, but they give, in three lines, the fine proclamation of General Galliéni, and interesting details concerning Cardinal della Chiesa. These details agree with the

little I know of him, and everything gives reason for hope of a most beneficent Pontificate.

There are strange reports about. Some one in an excited group declares that "they have been seen defiling through Paris." At first I thought this meant Germans, so my relief was all the greater on learning that it had to do with Cossacks.

It appears the English Fleet is bringing them from Archangel. Was there ever a war like this!

Other interesting, but less consoling, events must be in preparation, for at eleven o'clock I hear of the evacuation of the Red-Cross Hospital close here. We shall be left; under the American Flag we have nothing to fear but the bombardment. While waiting for the big guns, the Taubes continue their attacks.

"Their bombs have done more damage than is admitted," said one of our hospital-attendants at breakfast; "there are quite nine dead near me, in the quartier de l'Europe."

Some one else declares the Prussians are at St. Denis. This grows exciting.

As we have received no wounded yet, I go to Paris to inquire for my friends and see what preparations for the reception of the invader are being made. They are not very magnificent. The Maillot Gate, which is only a quarter of an hour's walk off, alone displays any war-like appearance with its small garrison, its felled trees, its *chevaux-de-frise*, and

deep enough trenches to protect the troops or perhaps to be furnished with explosives.

If that is the way the German gentlemen propose to enter (and it is a very tempting one ; just think—the Avenue de la Grande Armée, the Arc-de Triomphe, the Champs-Élysées !) instead of a triumphal march they may perhaps find a fine field of battle. In that case I shall be in the stalls.

We went through (I had taken a seat in the car of an unknown American) the Avenue du Bois. In this centre of Parisian fashion I see enormous requisitioned cars, several bearing the names of Belgian shops. But, picturesque and unexpected, I prefer one bearing in big letters *Canterbury Laundry*. It was always said that French Anglomaniacs had their washing done in London ; here are the good people of Kent getting their washing done in the Bois de Boulogne.

My American having to stop at the Rue Pierre Charron, I go on to G. G——'s who is at the Red Cross and then to Lady A——'s, to the Archbishop's Palace, to the Abbé L——'s rooms which look out upon the Square Sainte-Clotilde, and then to see Mme. G—— in the Rue de Lille, coming back past the Tuileries to take the Metropolitan to the Place de la Concorde.

All these wealthy quarters seem very quiet. A good many houses are shut up, but it is the usual season for that ; a few more people, perhaps in

carriages with luggage. Nowhere do I find real anxiety; beneath everything there is a fine calmness and manly steadiness.

The only sentiment beyond, and which dominates everything almost, is curiosity; I believe that if the Prussians go away without attacking us there will be a certain amount of disappointment.

5th September.

Still the wounded don't arrive; nevertheless we are ready; the hospital is installed in the Lycée Pasteur whose first pupil ought to have been received in October. It is an immense and splendid building; the cost of its erection can't have been less than five million francs. Still completely empty and in parts unfinished, it lends itself all the better to transformation. With its great class-rooms, its laboratories, its immense basements, its wide-opened bay-windows, its lofty ceilings, and its electrical and central-heating apparatus, it might be supposed originally intended for the victims of the War. Even its very mottoes put up a year ago, seemed to have been chosen for the present purpose. PATRIE on the shield over the great Courtyard; L'HEURE FRANÇAISE SONNERA TOUJOURS, on one face of the clock; QUAND L'HEURE SONNE, HOMME, SOIS DEBOUT on the other. Operation and radiography wards, pathological laboratory, room for dentistry, sweating-rooms, isolation rooms, kitchen, linen-room

—everything is brought to the highest point of perfection. Big motor-cars, furnished with stretchers and mattresses, are only waiting for a signal to go to fetch the wounded. We have already two hundred and fifty beds ; the number increases every day and may come to five or six hundred. The whole thing is kept up by the charity of Americans ; it was the Administrative Council of their hospital in Paris that from the beginning of the War took the initiative in the work. The Colony living in France itself gave almost the whole of the half-million francs subscribed during the first month. New York and the cities of the United States came in later, and despite the severe crisis there as elsewhere, one may feel sure friends will not be wanting. America has its Red Cross, which, as is right, helps the wounded of all nations, but among the belligerents she wished to distinguish the compatriots of La Fayette and Rochambeau ; our hospital is witness to her faithful gratitude. France will not forget it.

In addition to the advantages of a magnificent establishment, there is that of a very healthy and pleasant situation. Without counting the nearness of the Bois de Boulogne, our quarter, built over the ancient park of Louis-Philippe, contains a number of spacious avenues in which the houses are separated from the road by fine gardens. The surroundings this September morning are radiantly charming. It reminds me of the " residences " in the wealthy

cities of America where I twice found myself at this same season of the year—this ideal season they call there the Indian Summer. Still the same contrast between glorious Nature and the awful troubles of humanity.

Six o'clock in the evening. A consequence of these troubles affected me this afternoon. About three o'clock I received a telegram from the house where my mother lives. "Obliged to leave Clamart. Come as quickly as possible."

I think of what I had heard last week of the sudden evacuations of Rethel and Meaux. I see my old mother forced to start at once, with no means of transport, not knowing where to go, unable to join me or even to write to tell me where she will be.

I tell the Heads of the hospital of my anxiety and ask for a motor-car to go to fetch her, and one is ordered for me without delay. I inquire as to how I can find temporary quarters for my mother, and several ladies at once offer to take her in.

A quarter of an hour later I was rushing along the road to Clamart with a chauffeur and a stretcher-bearer. Thanks be to God, my mother was still there; there had been no question of the ordinary and ordered evacuation, but of advice given by the Mayor that aged and infirm persons should be sent away in case of urgent measures being taken. Luckily, also, I had not looked at the date of

the telegram. It had been dispatched yesterday. My anxiety would have been a hundred fold worse if I had known.

My mother wished to go to some cousins we have in Paris; we took with us, at the request of the manageress, two infirm ladies, whom she could not otherwise have got away, and who overwhelmed us with thanks. I made the car stop a little before we got to my cousin's house; she has two sons at the War, and must not be upset.

I leave my mother in good hands and hasten back to Neuilly where my services may be needed. But the moment has not yet come.

6th September.

Eleven o'clock in the morning. Still no wounded. Some of the ladies are getting impatient. Preparations go on increasing; we have nearly three hundred beds. As for me, I get the Chapel ready. Thanks to the Curé of the Parish of Saint Pierre, the Convent of Saint Thomas de Villeneuve and other generous friends, everything is arranged without taking a penny from the funds of the hospital for the purpose. I am none the less grateful to our committee for placing at my disposal the finest room in the Lycée, the Chemistry Lecture-Hall. After the War, perhaps, the Chapel will again become a class-room, as the Chaplains of the Army and Navy will lose their temporary posts.

But where Christ has passed there will remain some trace of the Divine.

In the same Lecture-Hall, at the top of the tiers of benches, the Chaplain to the English Embassy is preparing a Protestant Altar. The need for mixed Chapels is admitted by the Church in certain cases; I had only to inform the Archbishop of what would be the different creeds of our Staff and wounded.

Six o'clock in the evening. We have received our first guests: two English soldiers, slightly wounded, and a French Lieutenant suffering from appendicitis. More are announced for to-night.

All the motor-cars are gone to Villeparisis, where we know there are numbers of those wounded in the fight at Montmirail. No doubt that followed the engagements of the Ourcq where the *communiqué* at three o'clock reported that our army had checked the advance of the Germans. We are all anxiously waiting in the entrance-hall, nurses, doctors, assistants. They talk of fifty soldiers, most of them seriously wounded. Let them come, poor fellows! I think they would be nowhere better welcomed.

Eleven o'clock. We are still waiting, our bodies heavy with fatigue; we have been working so hard at preparations these last days; but our minds are awake and if eyes can't keep from half closing, hearts are wide open.

A quarter past eleven. As I was writing the last of these four lines, there was a telephone call. Everyone was alert at once. The communication is transmitted to us. "At Villeparisis there were only two hundred wounded. When our cars arrived they had already been fetched by other ambulances. So nothing to do, go to bed." We had to resign ourselves to that, a little cast-down, but not too much. It is quite enough in war-time to expect one event for another to happen.

7th September.

The real work has begun. This afternoon we received ten English soldiers. One has a bullet in his throat; another a crushed foot; the rest are wounded in the hands, the arms, the legs, the poor limbs so blue and frightfully swollen. Except one poor wretch, suffering from acute appendicitis, they are all jolly and good-humoured; we have to insist upon their sitting down, even those with wounded feet. The only thing they complain of, and that with laughter, is that they have not been able to wash for some days, nor to have undressed for weeks.

They are not allowed to talk of the events of the War till a fortnight after; but, as they are right in holding, it is not disobeying this order to give us confirmation—having seen them with their own eyes—of the atrocities of the Germans in Belgium,

especially of the fact that they very often, apparently whenever it was possible, put women and children in front of them in battle.

One subject of which they are never weary is the delightful welcome everywhere given to them.

"We might think we were at home," they say in tones of lively gratitude; "we are even received and treated better than in our own country."

A little popular scene comes just pat for the expression of these sentiments.

A big Highlander has opened a window that looks out upon the street; immediately there is a gathering and the crowd endeavours to express its sympathy by a discreet ovation. The arrival of two Englishwomen and your servant makes conversation possible. I am asked to explain, to recount, to interpret. The talk lasts a full quarter-of-an-hour. One of the Englishwomen offers the day's *New York Herald* to our hero; he has already read it. She proposes to bring him the next day's to this same window; I answer that he will be on his sick-bed and that it will be better to leave the paper with the Chaplain. This will be done and there will be added an illustrated paper giving war-scenes in which the English army plays a fine part.

Some one hands me a sheet that has just appeared. I read the *communiqué* aloud. It says: "Thanks to a very vigorous action of our troops, strongly

reinforced by the British army, the German forces which, yesterday and the day before, had advanced as far as the region of Coulommiers and Ferté-Gaucher, were obliged to retire slightly."

I allow myself to add that if we may believe more recent reports, our successes increase and that there is good reason for hope as to the battle still going on.

In fact for three days past I have felt much more confident, not only confident of the final success I have always believed in, but confident of approaching victories, of the defeat of the German army before reaching Paris, or at latest before Paris itself.

This comes perhaps from my receiving more information, thanks to the commandant of our transport service. Perhaps, too, I owe this optimism to an atmosphere in which one lives closer to the atmosphere of battle. I understand better the meaning and the import of what we hear on all sides—that the spirit of the Army is excellent. If it remains such as I can now testify to it among our wounded, our ambulance men, in myself, victory is assured. It is not possible that the spirit of the Teutons should be the same, after six weeks of marching without rest or truce in an enemy country, night and day harassed by an adversary whom they had been led to despise, and when they must give up the steadfastly promised entry into the fascinating city of Paris.

And then, how is the tremendous lie about Italian

co-operation, English neutrality, Belgian friendship, to be kept up? However German they may be, they must have taken count of the welcome of the Belgians; they must have discovered, were it only amongst the prisoners or the dead, soldiers of England!

V

8th September.

I HAVE just come back from our English ward. One of the men was begging for his military medal which had been put into the strong-box and which he was afraid he had lost. He was seriously uneasy, and I was delighted to give it back to him.

All our wounded, in their comfortable beds and taken the greatest care of, look better than they did yesterday.

I have had some news. It seems good, and anyhow it is of great importance. The great battle has really begun, as this morning's *communiqué* gave us to understand. It extends from the region of Meaux as far as Verdun—in Brie and Champagne. Nowadays it needs the names of two provinces to localize a battle!

It is truly the greatest encounter in the history of the human race. I remember how, in my childish lessons, I was attracted by the names of Aëtius and Attila and the Catalaunian battles. At the same spot, at the very moment I write, a similar battle, a greater battle, is being fought, a battle which will see, which is seeing, the working out of issues

as serious, and the mutual slaughter by more efficacious means, of armies four times as large.

Who will be the winner this time, Attila or we? —the two most civilized nations in the world, or those that the whole human race, beholding their doings, calls Barbarians?

The service of general intercession this afternoon at Saint-Etienne-du-Mont, in front of the shrine where the Patron-Saint of Paris lies, must have been beautiful. And neither the speaker nor the hearers could have been unmoved, if, after the passing of fourteen centuries, they considered the analogy of events. Geneviève, Jeanne d'Arc, gentle shepherdesses sent from God, save the flock of your people!

Ten o'clock at night. All our ambulances have just started for Meaux, where we heard at about nine o'clock that there were hundreds of unaided wounded. We sent doctors, nurses, dressings, in the ambulance-wagons, while our wealthy Americans carried provisions in their private motors. Meaux itself, evacuated last week and the centre of the present battle, must be totally without resources. I beg to go too, but am told that it will be better for me to stay where I am; they must have priests there, and the hospital must not be left without one at such a time.

The last motor-cars grunt under my window; they are off at top-speed, eating up the road, casting the brilliance of their lamps through the darkness

of the night, as our friends unconsciously cast the beauty of their service over so many horrors, so many hecatombs !

But this time, at least, it appears as if they had bought our deliverance ; our advantage increases. An American officer, come from near Meaux, says that the Germans fell back eight miles yesterday. If this might only be the beginning of their complete defeat, and the nearer ending of the War !

9th September.

Six o'clock in the evening. I have a free moment, though it would need hours to tell the story of this day.

Our cars returned from Meaux at eight o'clock this morning.

I thought I had caught a glimpse of the War in the coming and the testimony of the fugitives from Rethel and the frantic rush to get away at Paris stations ; but those were only, as I may say, reflected effects. Now, I have before my eyes its direct and immediate effects. One by one, on stretchers, under funereal-looking coverings, the victims of the fights of the day before yesterday are brought in.

From these bloody packages, which we open with infinite care, emerge big bodies with mutilated limbs and the suffering, patient faces of poor Africans. They are all skirmishers. There are two Frenchmen among them ; the twenty others are Arabs

or Negroes—Tunisians, Algerians, Moors and Senegalese. Their registered number, for the most part, is all the French they know ; it is by that we identify them. Two of a higher grade, a private in the first line and a corporal are a little less ignorant and help us with their comrades.

I don't know if it is in order to call a private in the first line of a higher grade ; anyhow it ought to be in this case for the Arab I am thinking of. His company, he tells us, charged too soon under the fire of the German artillery, long before the French had prepared the way (always the same waste of heroism !) and all but three fell. Our hero, being in the first line, rallied his two comrades and led them to another company. Wounded in the thigh, he went on fighting till a splinter of shell broke his arm.

Another skirmisher, a native of Drôme, who has just arrived alone, had his right hand broken. No longer able to fight, he set off on his bicycle to look for some place where he could find aid, and did not find any till he got to Paris !

In the English ward, where the patients are already better, I recount the story of the coming of the wounded Africans and the Battle of Meaux. "It was from round about Meaux," I say, "that the Germans began to fall back, and that was thanks to you who stopped them there."

Their eyes shone with joy, especially when I

added that the same movement had been going on for two days. If Paris is saved, they are quite happy.

Eleven o'clock at night. Two of our most comfortable cars have each just brought in an English officer from Nangis. They had been temporarily cared-for by private people; it had been intended to bring back a third, but he was found dead. The Curé of that little town had valiantly kept up its courage and organized assistance. Bombs from aeroplanes had done a good deal of harm around it; a woman had had her leg broken and a little nine-years'-old boy had been killed. Another woman had been killed outright with her child in her arms while the baby was unhurt.

One of our Englishmen has a bullet-wound through the lung; our doctors hope to save him. My last task on this exciting day was to make an inventory of his effects so as to put any valuable object in the strong-box. His poor tunic is pierced with two holes towards the middle; one at the entrance of the bullet, the other at its exit. All around there are big red stains.

12th September.

Last night we were expecting an English superior officer, General Snow, whom they had gone to fetch from Coulommiers. This shows that our Headquarters have left that town, no doubt in order to

advance to the North-East; that is another good sign.

General Snow did not arrive till this morning. I am told his wounds are not serious; his horse fell upon him; it will be a case of only a few days, luckily, for he himself had had to replace another general, and commanding officers are precious.

Last night two German wounded arrived, whom I have not yet seen; I have only made an inventory of what they brought with them this morning. Their belongings were soiled with mud and blood. We put under seal what was worth the trouble without examining too closely if it was brought from Germany or stolen in France. I can't say that as to a green apple found in a pocket; but there was a note-book bearing the heading of the little Seminary of Saint-Riquier that left me thoughtful.

In spite of all, I have not to make the slightest effort to feel drawn to them by a sincere feeling of pity, especially since I was told that when they arrived they were shaking all over.

A great part of my visits, up to now, is spent in writing letters for the illiterate or for those who can't use their hands. If they don't know how to dictate, I supply them with ideas, and I often add some reassuring words from the Chaplain-Secretary. A Moor, who knows three words of French, pronounced for me as address on the envelope a certain number of guttural syllables which would

astonish me if they carried the letter to its destination. For serious news we sent the letters through the Regiment, which has the addresses of the families.

Yesterday I was able to get away for a couple of hours to go to see my mother, whom I had the pleasure of finding well and contented at our cousin's. *She* is very anxious; of her two sons in the Army, the younger, my godson, an Algerian skirmisher, has sent no news since he left; I dare not say no sign of being alive. And before the War he used to write very often. I did my best to comfort the poor mother by explaining to her that that proved nothing. I did not add what I know of the ordeal undergone by that valiant army, nor that one of our wounded, near Meaux, had seen all the men of his company but three fall.

One could never repeat too often how many individual griefs go to make up a great war. Still we must think of it; we must fathom it to its depths; we must draw from it a lasting horror of this unspeakable carnage, so that the present sacrifices—if we must carry them out to the end while we are in it—may guarantee a real peace, a durable peace, a pacific peace; from the disturbers, the murderers, of to-day, and from those who in the future might be tempted to do likewise, we must take away the means of doing harm.[1]

[1] PS.—After three months of silence, the young Zouave let us know, at the end of October, that he was a prisoner

The news becomes really good. Along the whole line, the immense line, in Brie, in Champagne, in Lorraine, the enemy at last is falling back; and at several points, notably on the right wing, where he counted on turning us and rushing on Paris, a real retreat has begun.

The superhuman fatigue of six weeks of fighting; the uninterrupted march over hostile country; the waste of munitions; the first attacks of hunger—it is too much for the endurance of these troops, however strong they be, and even their horses are exhausted.

A few days more, a few hours, perhaps, and the historic Battle of the Marne (it is always these gigantic names!) checks the invasion, or even forces it back; destroys the plans of Germany; reverses to our advantage the course of the War; changes it (mon Dieu, is it possible?) into a victory for France. . . . How that would soothe our sufferings and our mourning! For after all—it makes one shudder to think of it—we might have lost these thousands and thousands of human lives and yet have been vanquished. But, while greeting with immense longing and a joy ready to burst forth, this growing dawn of victory, I see, I can't help seeing, what gives their tints to the clouds around it, by what precious colour, what blood the horizon is reddened.

in Germany. May such an example give hope to some families.

Last night, in horrible wind and rain, our ambulances, in the forsaken villages about Meaux, were still gleaning wounded left uncared-for for several days. They brought back a dozen in the middle of the night, and at six o'clock this morning they set forth to look for others. The battle-fields after a battle are a piteous sight, they tell me, especially when they are so endless, and one can't tell in what wood, in what solitary barn, or in what church, the most wretched will be discovered.

With a mind bent upon the pitiful goal, as the motor flies along, one scarce gives a look to the broken-down trees, the burnt houses, the remains of equipments, the horses dead and already swollen-up, or to those that stand erect upon the hills, starving, motionless, like great skeletons.

At last one makes out a piteous group; one stoops over the blood-stained grass, ministers to soul and body; distributes drink, nourishment, dressings; revives strength and hope.

Very gently the poor wounded are wrapped up, lifted, laid on the mattresses of the ambulance or on the cushions of the private car; and here they are off for the home of science and kindness, where the hideous crimes of war will find amends, if amends be possible. There is a science that kills and a science that cures, as there are good and evil, and God and devils. . . .

14th September.

The wounded arrive in even greater numbers. The other ambulances and hospitals are complaining at not getting any. We have no lack of them because we have cars to go to fetch them in ourselves. They are still the victims of the beginning of the great battle, of the great victory; for since yesterday afternoon, the good news has been confirmed. Victory—that is the sovereign remedy for our wounded. And what a joy it is to take them the announcement, and between the beds from which they raise themselves to listen better, to read them the bulletins that report it!

We need it, too, to endure the sight of their sufferings. Once bathed, shaved, clothed in clean linen, eased by the first attentions, refreshed by sleep and good food, it is delightful to look at them in their little white beds, with quiet faces and eyes full of gratitude and mild wonder.

But how affecting is their arrival!

Those who came in on Saturday night—Frenchmen—brought from Montereau, had received some attention, and they were very nearly clean; but their wounds, already four or five days old, and dressed once hurriedly and too late, made them suffer cruelly. But of the twelve none made any complaint; only one amidst the twinges of his pain shut his eyes and pressed his lips together; the

others had strength enough to command their feelings.

There was one especially, a man of the people, whose look will never fade from my memory. I saw him come in on a stretcher, rolled up in the covering, his poor body, so long, so thin, so bruised ; I saw his face, nearly black, with high cheek-bones ; his eyes shining with fever—and his smile, yes, his smile, so beautiful, so full of resignation and sweetness, that it brought to one's mind the Christian martyrs looking up to Heaven amidst their tortures.

The doctor told me he had been wounded in the head, the leg, and the arm.

" Are you in great pain ? " I asked, as I took his hand I should like to have kissed.

" No," he answered ; " a little tired by the car."

That same night we received an officer of twenty-one, who had left Saint-Cyr for the Front, with two wounds. I won't give other indications. But I may tell of one of his trials. Picked up on the field of battle by German orderlies, he was taken, with their own wounded, to a neighbouring village and into the sole room of a forsaken house. There were only two mattresses for the eight of them, and he had to spend two nights and a day lying near these coarse, dirty creatures, smelling of tobacco and getting tipsy on the wine in the house.

All their rage was against the English ; there was to be no quarter for them any more than for the

blacks. As to the French, they were brave adversaries; besides they would soon make an end of them, and then it would be the turn of the Russians —poor soldiers—and of the English, who had no army.

Two days later, our Lieutenant was allowed to join other wounded men, his compatriots, in a neighbouring house. A few hours after, the enemy began its retreat, and left them, as they did their own save the officers, to the French troops that re-took the village.

15th September.

Several of our wounded have gone through the same experience of captivity and deliverance. They bear witness to the honourable behaviour of the German medical officers. For example, here is one of the stories I heard.

"After the battle, I found myself in a ditch, incapable of moving. A German surgeon passed by. He gave me bread and coffee, and promised to come back in the evening, if he could, or on the next day. The night and the next day passed without my seeing any one; it seemed very long. That night he came again; 'I did not forget you,' he said, 'but I had no time,' and he had me taken away and took good care of me."

Such facts deserve to be put on record. In this letting loose of horror and hatred, we must dwell on the few features capable of softening hearts.

When I think that this morning, at the head of one of the most-read papers, an article was allowed to pass which advised that no prisoners should be taken in future battles, but that enemies should be cut down "like unchained wild beasts," should be "strangled like swine!"

Nothing, not even the sacking of Senlis, which gave rise to them, can justify such explosions of fury.

I know well that the present German atrocities pass all limits, and that they often assume a general and official character which peculiarly increases their import.[1]

But surely does not that alone prove the inferiority of our adversary?

Far from us for ever be the idea of giving ourselves up to so monstrous a rivalry!

And let us not attribute the testimony I have heard to exceptional or ingenuous leniency. It comes from soldiers wounded in different engagements, and for the most part greatly exasperated with the enemy. If they do justice to the German Medical Service, and in general to the Reserves—"They are men like ourselves, married, fathers of families, reasonable"—they are never tired of hurling reproaches against the active Army, that which really represents—without the correctives that nor-

[1] See *Les Crimes Allemands, d'après les temoignages Allemands*, by Joseph Bédier, in the collection of *Études et Documents sur a Guerre* (Librairie Armand Colin).

mal existence brings later—the military formation of Prussia.

For instance, here are some of the stories told me, taken from the life, and in all their native confusedness.

"The regular soldiers are no good," said a brave peasant-reservist. "They bumped my wound with the butt-ends of their rifles. They broke and threw about everything I had. When the Reserve came up, it was very different; they looked after me. My comrade, wounded in the chest, was dying of thirst; he did die soon afterwards. I dragged myself along to go to fetch him some water; the youngsters took aim at me, so I was forced to turn back and lie down again."

Another, who began by praising the German surgeons, had seen soldiers of the active army strip completely naked one of our men who had been shot through the lung and whom they had taken prisoner after he had been wounded. "When they saw that they would have to leave him behind they stripped him of everything, even his shirt; and it was from pure spite, for they took nothing away with them."

Here is a third story, word for word: "My arm was broken and I was losing a great deal of blood; I crawled out of the trench on all-fours, or rather on all-threes. They arrived and took everything away from me. I crawled on. The trench was about 50

metres from the village. I dragged myself into a house where everything had been pillaged; there was nothing left but scraps. I caught sight of a chap going on all-fours, too; I called to him and he came and lay down beside me. The German surgeon came, looked after us and gave us some coffee and bread. From there, early in the morning, I got to the Church, and found M. le Curé; he took care of us. All the other people were gone. There wasn't a house that hadn't been pillaged except the Presbytery and the Church. It was there that your ambulance came to fetch us. It's five days to-day since I was wounded late in the afternoon. My captain was the first to be killed. They never miss an officer they can see. We did for a good many, too, those three days. But of over two hundred of the Company there are not twenty left."

Another: "We fought that day from eight o'clock in the morning till eleven o'clock at night; I was wounded at four o'clock, two fingers cut off my left hand. It wasn't serious, but I lost a lot of blood and my hands were dirty with earth and rifle-grease. I walked six miles at night, so as not to be taken by the Germans; we were told they were coming back. The active army is brutal, but not the Reserve."

The better to understand these stories and others we shall give, it must be remembered that they have to do with the battles that marked the check to the

German Right Wing and following which the enemy had to make a precipitate retreat.

"A splinter of shell knocked me down and wounded me in the side. I was two days without its being dressed. The Germans arrived. There was a Saint-Cyrien beside me; they took away his money. They didn't search me; they only took my haversack with the bread and chocolate. They took me off and made me follow them. We got to the Church. The surgeon looked after us and gave us soup. We were going to be taken away by the Germans, but they didn't have the time. They went away and left us in the Church and twenty or their own men in a house; they only took their officers. We were taken to Crouy, where your ambulance found us."

VI

16th September.

Here are two remarks heard this morning á propos of the pursuit that followed our victory on the Marne. The first is that of a young Alpine Chasseur.

"They ran, they ran, so that we could not overtake them. But the swine had given us what for! Of four thousand of us that came down from the Alps, there are a thousand left. The others are not all dead; some are wounded." [1]

The second remark was that of a Reservist.

"We fell upon them in a wood. Didn't we just knock them about, poor wretches! There oughtn't to be wars like that."

No, truly, there ought not to be, and the crime

[1] According to some statistics we should have one killed for fifteen wounded in the infantry, and one for five in the artillery (our cavalry has suffered little so far). The reason is that heavy German artillery always aims at ours so as to destroy it, and never at the infantry. Now, the splinters of its big shells are extremely dangerous, while the bullets of the rifles and mitrailleuses produce slight wounds that heal easily if they are taken in time. As to the shells of the field guns they appear but little efficacious.

of its authors never seemed to me greater than to-day.

I had only just got up when I heard that a train full of wounded had fallen into the Marne, and I saw our ambulances hurriedly starting with nurses, help, food. What an abyss of trouble this foretells!

While I am still overwhelmed by the news, a wounded man, brought in on a wheeled chair, is suddenly seized with hæmorrhage; the small bone of his leg, completely crushed, has torn an artery; the blood flows in torrents; it takes many minutes to stop it. By the white cheeks, the troubled eyes, of the sick man, his strength and life can be seen to be ebbing away. Here he is saved; but on the field of battle how many must so die whom a little help might have restored!

In the afternoon, we get some of the English, wounded near Soissons. What courage and what spirit they all show! Many of them are even merry.

"I fought until such or such a day, when I was wounded." "And since then?" "Since then? I've been travelling."

A young soldier whose thigh has been penetrated by a splinter of shell, complains of being so dirty; he laughs as he points to his beard and his nails. And to think that his wound prevents him from going into the big bath! He is washed in his bed.

An officer, six feet high, which does not prevent him being in the infantry, has his forehead bound with a bandage that has more red than white in it. He shows me in his cap the hole made by the bullet. "A narrow escape," I tell him. He had still more luck than that; two more bullets, without touching him, went, one through his sock above his foot, and the other, in the middle of his arm, through his tunic.

He is confident about the present engagement; he believes that more than a hundred thousand of the French are surrounding the two divisions of the enemy against which the English are fighting and which are strongly placed to the north of Soissons.

Full of pity I ask him to look at two wounded men in a pitiful state, who are being taken out of the ambulance and brought in on stretchers.

"Those are not the worst," he says; "far from it! There were many in such a state on the battle-field that we could not bring them away. Let us hope they will be looked after on the spot."

"During the five days of fighting you saw, was there not an armistice for carrying away the wounded and burying the dead?"

"No, that wouldn't do; you can't trust the Germans. Besides, they are in a hole; we won't let them go; let them get out of it themselves, if they can."

The animosity of the English against the enemy is deeper than ours, as that of the enemy is against them.

Nine o'clock at night. Those who escaped from the Marne arrived at the end of the day; we have fifty as our share. The catastrophe took place at Mary, at a quarter to twelve at night.

An ambulance train carrying five hundred wounded going westwards, by a mistake in the points was sent along a blocked line. In the middle of the night it came to a bridge which had been destroyed three days earlier. The greater part of the carriages fell into the water, others were piled up on each other on the embankment; of fifteen, only the two last escaped, and they contained wounded Germans.

"Much worse than a battle," all the poor fellows tell me.

And indeed, can one picture a horror like it? In complete darkness, the half-dressed wounds, the uneasy sleep; the nightmares; then the abrupt awakening, the fall into something unknown—into space, into water; the crushed limbs, the cries, the dying companions.

"I was asleep; everything was turned upside down; 'we are in the water!' I heard some one say. I felt it rising, my right arm had been pierced with the splinter of a shell; but I got it out all the same and climbed along the side of the engine.

Everything was topsy-turvy. Out of my carriage four were saved."

I shall see them again to-morrow. Let us sleep, if we can.

17th September.

When I went my rounds this morning, I found my drenched patients pretty well, rested and contented. "It is better here than in the Marne."

They describe the accident to me and also the fights of the last week and the pursuit of the Germans. I give it in the words of an Alpine Reservist, from the country about Aix-en-Provence.

"On Thursday and Friday we had marched all day without a shot. They were just running away; it was impossible to catch them up. We came up with them on Saturday evening, at Vic-sur-Aisne. We had stirred them up. They tried to blow up the bridge; but it was impossible; we had got there in time. We crossed behind them, and at that moment they opened fire on us; but we had the guns of the 47th trained on the left and they forced them to fall back still further. That night our company took the outposts.

"On Sunday morning, at seven o'clock, we started from the river; but this time we didn't go so fast; their heavy artillery fired upon us from above; and they had a terribly strong position, so that we could not make more than four kilometres in

the whole day. We marched under the fire of the artillery till six o'clock in the evening. That's the place where a lot fell! There were divisions that were wiped out. You see we had been told that the position must be taken at all costs, so as not to let the German infantry advance.

"At six o'clock a splinter of shell went into my leg; it's there still. They carried me to a first-aid station, where I got my first dressing and spent the night. After that, they took me to Vic, to the Red Cross field hospital, and then to the station at Compiègne, where they put us into the train that had the accident.

"The first carriages fell into the river; ours took a turn and rolled over into the road beneath a long way down. It was broken to bits, but our stretchers saved us and we almost all got out. It didn't hurt me much, my leg was a little squeezed—the one with the splinter in it. The civilians got up; they opened the hospital at Mary for us, where the Boches had left nothing at all. The Bishop came at nine o'clock and gave us packets of tobacco. How nice he is, that Monseigneur! The American ambulance arrived about eleven o'clock, and at six we were here.

"All the same one wishes it was all over; it's regular butchery."

18*th September.*

All day yesterday, brought from the station at

Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, English from the Battle of the Aisne were coming in ; most of them seriously wounded, some the day before, others three, four, or even five days ago.

Those that arrived in the afternoon showed cheerful faces ; but whether in consequence of the higher state of fever or from having had to wait so long, those who were brought in at eight, and still more at eleven o'clock at night could draw on their fine spirit for nothing but a stoical resignation.

One even, when they lifted his stretcher, let a cry escape him which made us shudder ; then he closed his eyes and was silent. They carry in first those most sorely hurt without any further formality than taking the name on their identification discs. Some there are, moreover, who cannot speak, having teeth, lips, jaws, shattered. Others, wounded in the throat, in the throes of death, cry for drink but cannot swallow.

" Where are you wounded ? " we ask, stooping over the coverings that wrap the poor bleeding bodies.

" In both legs and the arm," answers one. Another : " In the hand, in the hip, and in the foot."

Several silently point to their throat, their head, their side. A splinter of shell has gone through this one from the back to the lower part of the stomach ; a few, for all answer, lift up their cover-

ings, and one sees great black patches surrounded by splashes of red ; an enormous foot or calf, looking all the more swollen by contrast with the other leg so thin ; bandages soaked with blood. In spite of the open windows, one breathes its sickly odour.

Over those who must still wait (our hall is quite full), we spread towels and clean sheets which in a few minutes are soaked with blood.

We finish our work in silence, overcome with fatigue, with horror, with pity, thinking that the very battle where these things were done may last for days, and the War, for months, who knows ? for a year !

19*th September.*

Words could not express the effect of the things I sometimes see. Perhaps I shall grow accustomed to them.

Last night I was waked at two o'clock to go to one English soldier who had just died ; it was calling me a little late, and, morover, he was an Anglican, as I could see from his identification disc (C.E., *Church of England* ; R.C., *Roman Catholic*).

I blessed the poor body and accompanied it with prayers to the mortuary with the nurse and the night superintendent. As we went, the lights were put out before us so as not to rouse the patients in the wards we had to cross.

Afterwards, along the dark corridors, on the

contrary, they turned up the electric light. And I liked that better; death is not a plunge into darkness. When we got to the funeral ward, we found another Englishman, dead after an operation. He lay alone there in the dark. I prayed for him.

This morning I gave absolution to a Lyonnais who has but little chance of escaping death, his brain laid open, half his body paralysed, but still quite conscious and sensible and able to answer yes or no to questions asked him. A hint of gratitude seemed to look out with difficulty from his motionless eyes, and, at the last, soft tears appeared in them.

At noon I hear that the doctors worked till three o'clock in the morning. Arms and legs in which gangrene had set in had to be amputated. The operating theatre was nothing but a pool of blood, an assistant nurse told me.

This afternoon, I gave absolution and Extreme Unction to an Irishman who had never regained consciousness since he was brought in. In his pocket-book there was a letter addressed to his mother. The nurse is going to add a word to say that he received the Last Sacraments. Christian hope will soften the terrible news.

Oh, Emperors of Austria and Germany! If you could be there when Death brings his tidings to that poor Irish home, and to the thousands, the hundred thousands of others, in England, in France, in Russia, in Serbia, in Belgium, in your own States,

in all Europe, and even in Africa and Asia. . . . May God enlighten your conscience!

This gloomy day has nevertheless had its pleasant moments—those I have spent with the wounded on the way to recovery, who welcome me as a friend, and of whom several have made their confessions. I love the little Irishman, so pitiable and so resigned, his rosary always round his arm. Badly wounded in the thigh and left for two days in a wood, gangrene set in, and amputation was necessary as soon as he arrived. The operation has been successful and he is getting up his strength. He smiles whenever one goes to see him.

To-day, too, I had a hurried, but interesting, talk with Mr. Bacon, the former Ambassador of the United States, who at the beginning of the War came to bring us his loyal sympathy. During the last few days he has fetched a good number of wounded from the places where fighting had been going on, and he has been able to see with his own eyes the traces left by the German army. His testimony will be, indeed is, of great service for us with American opinion.

More valuable still is the presence here of the present Ambassador, Mr. Herrick, who would not leave Paris and who is able to be of such use to it. Though his functions will not begin till later on, Mr. Sharp, his nominated successor, has also chosen to be with us from the beginning of the War.

Since all three meet together, and all of them love France, let us rejoice that we possess three United States' Ambassadors at the same time.

20th September.

Nine o'clock at night.—At Mass this morning there were twenty soldiers and two officers—all those whose wounds allowed them to get up.

I need not say, it was obligatory on no one; but the performance of religious duties seems to have once more become—as it has never ceased to be with other nations—a quite normal action in our Army.

On this third Sunday of September—the Feast of the Seven Dolours of the Blessed Virgin—there is no need of anything but to remind them, with an address of less than ten minutes, of the words in the Gospel which tell of Mary, standing at the foot of the Cross, watching the suffering, the agony, the death, of her beloved Son.

The comparison was only too easy with so many poor mothers dreading or receiving disastrous news; with France and the other countries seeing their finest sons perishing; with the Church, looking on, powerless, at the mortal strife of her children. In the name of the Divine Victim offered up in the Sacrifice of the Mass, as He was offered up on Calvary, we prayed together to God to shorten these days of anguish, and to make them serve to

the betterment of our souls and the progress of humanity.

Eleven o'clock at night.—Deaths are beginning; I have just been ministering to a dying Irish soldier, and to a French officer seized with tetanus; both in isolation wards.

It is to be feared that we shall have many, since in consequence of the efficiency of the hospital in surgeons and operating-wards, we are provided for the most serious cases.

VII

21st September.

Four funerals to-day! All English; one was a Catholic; I followed the procession, and blessed the grave. The long journey from here to the new cemetery was exceedingly mournful; those four hearses, followed by a crowd, doubtless sympathetic, but still composed of strangers, and finally the burial in that common grave.

As I went up to my room just after supper, I met the body of one of those to whom I ministered last night. The hospital attendants had been obliged to put it down for a moment while they opened doors. The white shape, completely wrapped up, lay upon the floor; I knelt down by it to bless it and say a prayer.

This is the atmosphere the War has created for us, and in which we are going to live—for how many months? There is little time, and less courage, for writing.

This morning, however, on my round of visits, I heard and took note of a very animated story, which it will be sufficient to repeat. It is absolutely from the life. The most I will do is to steer the

narrator a little so as to keep chronological order. Its authenticity can't be called in question.

My soldier was born in Paris, and had spent fourteen years at Bordeaux; but his story was verified and at times filled up by a comrade, his next-door neighbour, who had seen, or suffered, the same events:—

"On Monday, the 7th, we were going down to the Nanteuil station; we went through a village pillaged by the Germans, we took the formation of a line of skirmishers. Then the shells came; the earth flew about—holes you might have buried an ox in! We saw them coming—ZZZ . . . boom! We had time to take shelter.

"When we got to the edge of the wood, we went scouting; we had been told to advance; but, be hanged to it! they had already made a mark of us. The artillery made havoc of us; my bugler, close to me, was shot dead; he didn't speak a word, poor boy! I was hit in the leg; it was about two o'clock. As I couldn't drag myself further, my comrade, before he went, hid me under three trusses of hay and my head under my haversack. Splinters of shell mangled it, that poor haversack; but without it . . . ! A few yards away, a comrade whose leg was broken, and who had a splinter of shell in his arm, was wounded again in seven or eight places. I stayed there all day. At night some men of the 101st got me into the wood, where there were

several French wounded as well as a German captain, wounded the day before. He was in pain, too, poor wretch.

"About midnight, French soldiers came to look for those that could be carried; only my comrade and I were left, and the German captain. There were other wounded farther away, for we could hear their moans. It was very dismal.

"We spent two days there without any help. About three o'clock on Wednesday, here were the Germans again. I said: 'We are all lost.' Some of them looked uglily at us. But the captain told them we had been kind to him. The first night I still had a little bread in my haversack and some spirit of mint; and we shared it. I could not give him drink, for there was none.

"The captain told them to look after us. They took him away and we were left alone; but soon they came back. An orderly tied my leg to the handle of a spade, because there were lots lying about. They carried us on a little further, to another outskirt of the wood, twenty or twenty-five yards from their batteries—about as far as from here to the end of the ward; we could see them firing.

"And then at the end of five minutes here was the French artillery at work, and then we *did* think ourselves done for! How it rained shell! The Boches ran away and left us quite alone; and

they left their guns, too. An hour later the French firing ceased; the Germans came back to look for their guns, and took us away, too. Two or three miles on stretchers before we got to the high-road. There they put us into a car. There were quite twenty-five Germans and a few Frenchmen, squeezed tight together. I could not stretch my leg; it was very painful. There was a French non-commissioned officer there that fainted twice."

Here the narrator appeals to his companion in misery, now his next-door neighbour in bed:—

"What was the name of that village that was all on fire?"

"I don't know," the other answers; "but I remember that it warmed us."

It must have been the village of Beth, as I learnt later from the non-commissioned officer just spoken of, and who was also in our hospital.

The story went on: "You smelt corpses all along the road—a regular stench. Between twelve and one at night, we got to the village of Cuvergnon, where they had their field-hospital. The surgeons undid us and dressed our wounds well. Then they put us into a shed in the open air. It was raining, and I got wet, because I was on the outside. But they gave us nothing to eat,[1] nothing all day long except a little water to drink.

[1] They treated the non-commissioned officer better, either because of his rank or because he was weaker.

"We spent that night and Thursday morning there. Between three and four in the afternoon, they took us all pell-mell—French and Germans together—to a farm not far off; and in the evening they gave us some bones, nothing else; no bread; they hadn't even got any for themselves.

"On Thursday night they went away without a word; we saw a man packing his haversack in the room. They left all the wounded there—six Frenchmen and thirty-five Germans, of whom four were officers.

"On Friday, first of all, we saw the *gendarmes* arrive, who went at once to warn the Mayor. We were put into another house, the French apart. A few minutes afterwards we saw a French regiment arrive. Ah! you can fancy what a joy it was! The colonel congratulated us, embraced us, and promised we should be taken away in ambulances. The people of the neighbourhood brought us food; a lady of the place washed us, and dressed our wounds, while we were waiting for the ambulances. How kind she was, that lady! A saintly woman!

"Then, it was Saturday when an ambulance came for the first set. As for us, we were taken in the evening, with a German officer, to Crépy-en-Valois, where there were some kind nuns. From there, on

Before joining the others in the open shed, his wounds were dressed in a tent, and an assistant-surgeon gave him two cups of very hot chocolate.

Sunday, the American ambulance brought us to Neuilly. It was rather a long way; but once here, we were all right; yes, indeed! It's paradise. Now we are saved.

"But the things we have seen! I saw an officer —his brain was hanging over his eye. And the black corpses, and the bloated horses! It's the night that's the saddest; you hear cries: 'Help, help!' Some of them are calling for their mothers. No one answers."

22nd September.

Half-past eleven. This morning there was the funeral of an English officer. A detachment of the Republican Guard provided military honours. His wife, who had started as soon as she had heard, arrived an hour too late.

A Zouave is just dead.

And the battle in which they were hit a week ago is not yet ended. God be thanked that it is turning little by little to our advantage! But nine days of this massacre! Last night again four English officers, seriously wounded, were brought in. Good news concerning the operations is not enough to dispel the vision of wounds, nor that of coffins, and so many dead otherwhere, in hospitals, on the field of battle! So many wives, mothers, children, for ever deprived of their support and their beloved!

And looking down upon these scenes of slaughter,

the Cathedral of Reims burning to its end! Our beloved France discrowned of her most beautiful memory!

But still more to be pitied is the German nation, for ever dishonoured.

Six o'clock. Typical hospital afternoon—dying men, serious cases, good progress in recoveries.

At one o'clock, as I rose from table, I was summoned to a room on the second floor, where four Englishmen, one of them a Catholic, were dying of tetanus—that implacable disease! If only there could have been less delay in fighting it![1]

After that I visited the big wards downstairs. There are a number of serious cases there, but only one patient in immediate danger, and he is asleep. There are others I see, notably a Scotchman, who is a Catholic, and glad to talk to a priest. I was very much touched myself, and I had scarcely left him when my emotion was stayed by an impulse to laugh—a rather rare thing in these days.

As I had just spoken in English, I addressed the next patient in the same tongue: "Any better?" "Oh, yes! you may well say it is *embêtant*!" a pleasant voice from Marseilles answered.

In four beds of wounded men, we go from Ireland to Africa, to the Scotch Lakes and to Cannebière.

[1] PS.—Thanks to preventive injections of serum, cases of tetanus have become very rare.

My round ends in a small ward where I find perhaps a dozen Frenchmen, almost all seated or lying on their beds in comfortable pyjamas. As soon as I enter two call out to me that they will come to Mass to-morrow. I seat myself on the table in the middle and the conversation becomes general. By fits and starts they all recount their experiences. There ought to have been a phonograph, or at least I ought to have been able to write it down; but that would have extinguished the sacred fire. They talked mostly of the pursuit that followed the Battles of the Marne.

"We found Alboches everywhere about, even at the end of several days—in lofts, in the hay, behind the bean-stalks. The woods were full of little sets of them. At night they came over to get beetroots, and carrots, and apples. We went into a church in a forsaken village; a poor old fellow, with quite grey hair, was there. And if he didn't fall on his knees making signs that he had three children! We brought him away and treated him like one of ourselves.

"Another time—it was in a trench; there were lots of dead in it, and four alive; they were dying of hunger, and didn't they just fall upon our bread! Another time, when there were only four of us, we came upon fifteen Germans. They threw down their rifles, and one of them explained in French that they wanted to be taken prisoners; they

hadn't had anything to eat for three days; they'd had quite enough of such a war!"

This last trait is universal; I have heard of it a score of times. The Germans in masses hold out like a thick wall; dispersed, they think only of surrender, especially if they are hungry.

23rd September.

The men of my ward of yesterday have given me a pleasant surprise. Not two, but ten came to Mass this morning—all those who could leave their beds. Fancy my gratification! So I welcomed them, after the gospel, with a little sermon, lasting three minutes, which appeared to go to their hearts as straight as it came from mine.

Another funeral this afternoon, of an English Protestant and a French Catholic.

At the cemetery, a leading man of Neuilly, M. Georges N.-L., made an excellent speech on patriotic concord; finally he showed that what was the greatest consolation was the eternity of happiness God accords to the martyrs to duty.

I could not help speaking a few words of agreement with his. In war-time, there is no doubt things put on a different look, and some of them a better one.

24th September.

Yesterday we received a visit from His Eminence

Cardinal Amette. The President and the members of the Committee showed him over all principal parts of the hospital, and he congratulated them on so perfect an organization.

He stood, fatherly and friendly, beside the wounded, finding for each words of sympathy and comfort. Our Bretons and Irish seemed the most delighted with his blessing; but there was none that was not glad to touch his hand.

Before he left he promised me his generous co-operation as to books and objects of piety that might give pleasure to our poor wounded. His prolonged pauses beside each bed in the large wards, left him no time to visit all the smaller ones. It was very touching to hear the complaints from English Protestants and brave Moors about this quite involuntary abstention. "We're French, too!" said these last.

VIII

25th September.

It's really beautiful, a ward for the wounded, with its snow-white beds ; its glass tables ; its great bays full of light, its spotless floors and walls ; with its rolling shelves of dressings, remedies, disinfectants ; with its nurses, both eager and calm ; always smiling and yet so serious, watching over everything flying noiselessly from place to place ; and, lastly, with its patients well combed and washed ; newly-shaved, easy, rested, some dozing, others entertained by some light reading, or smiling from afar at a visitor.

But what suffering and endurance is hidden beneath these quiet looks, and at the cost of what strength of mind they can be kept up, only betrayed here and there by a stifled moan or the involuntary contraction of features which the least movement causes, a passer-by, even with the softest of hearts, could not guess, if he had not had the sad privilege of being present at the time of wound-dressing.

Yesterday I begged for this privilege, not, need I say ? for vain curiosity—that would be punished enough by the horror of the sight—but with the

idea of entering more thoroughly into the minds of my poor friends, and by better knowing their troubles the better to sympathize with them.

Such things are beyond description. Just a few words, always with the same aim of strengthening in us the determination that this War shall be carried on to such a point that it will be the last—to such an end, anyhow, that the enemy cannot make it afresh for several centuries.

The most serious wound is taken first; a hole large enough to put one's fist in dug in the arm by a splinter of shell.

Oh! when after the wadding and the bandages have been taken off, there appears, gaping amidst a circle of swellings, that crater of red blood, black blood, of purulent matter! And the face of the patient while the open wound is being painted with tincture of iodine! Under the sting he shrinks, he leans his head upon the arm of the brave nurse; and he holds his tongue.

He holds his tongue, too, that other who had been hit in the leg with a bullet and shrapnel; while the wound above his foot is being dressed, a hole in his calf suppurates, and presently a wound between his ribs must be dressed.

The third does more than hold his tongue; he smiles—such fine and delicate features!—with no less than five or six shrapnel bullets in his thighs. While they clean his draining-tubes and change

the compresses, he can't help jumping a little; but he talks of other things. The dear young fellow, just twenty was wounded in the company commanded by his father, who in his turn was also wounded.

O France! with these admirable Castelnaus, how many other families are paying for your salvation by equal heroism!

Sometimes the pain is so great that the strongest spirit can't keep the tortured body silent.

One has had his ankle-bone shot right through by a bullet which split the bones of the leg; the smaller bone had to be taken out in fragments. When the dressing is taken off the terribly swollen foot; when they wash the central hole and the cracks, moans, plaintive and prolonged, "Oh's!" break from the patient; and to see the look of the injury, to breathe the smell, to listen to the cries of this strong young man, is heartrending.

Awful War! Awful War!

I was talking with a doctor this evening and saying that I had never seen anything worse. "That's because you haven't been on the battle-field," he answered; "you haven't seen the dead, the dying, the wounded begging for something to drink!"

Oh, that thirst of the wounded lasting for long hours and sometimes for days . . . ! Formerly, to help them, to carry them off, there were days of armistice; there are still between the Austrians

and the Russians; with the Germans they are not possible; they would make use of them to attack us. Battles lasting over a week, and no truce to bury the dead, to take up the wounded! Attempts are still made under the rain of shrapnel and bullets; but they are too much for you, and if you don't remain master of the field, they have to be given up.

Sometimes the enemy attends to them; he finishes off some; he takes care of others. At times he goes off himself, and for long no one comes. How many days we picked them up round about Meaux—in deserted houses, on the hills and in the woods!

Under the date of the 21st I took notes of a story which threw some light on this forsaking; though the teller had near him companions in suffering and a promise of help. But those no one sees, no one hears, who know not if any one will come, who feel themselves dying quite alone, or amongst the dead! . . .

26th September.

A score of wounded came to us yesterday from the Battle of the Aisne. Decidedly the worse cases are kept for us, and it is very wise not to send them further.

Here is a man from Lyons, whose story, as well as his appearance, shows forth, not a selfish and cowardly fear, but the horror of what he has gone through.

"We were marching and fighting as much by night as by day. Quite eighty fell beside me on the field. If you could only have heard their cries! I was lost on the plains for four days. I had gone out scouting; the Germans used their machine-gun; my battalion had gone. No houses; nothing. I fell down in the clover and was all alone. I called to my mother, my wife; I called to my children."

Another, a brave little Zouave, a farmer in the neighbourhood of Puy, hit in both legs four days ago, tells his story more quietly and consecutively.

"I was stationed near Soissons when we tried to put the Germans to flight. They were intrenched in quarries. We began shelling them.

"I was eighteen months in Morocco. I was wounded in the left thigh on the fourth of June; cured after three weeks in hospital. We started on the 1st September, disembarked at Cette; passed Bordeaux, Rouen, Amiens, and Clermont de l'Oise, where we got out of the train. After a day's march and a night's halt, we started to dislodge them from Noyon. We came up with them in the evening, and at once we took a village."

"Were you glad to meet them?"

"Oh, yes! especially as we wanted to stick a few. But we were in the second-line, for counter-attacks, so that that first time I couldn't even once fire my rifle. We slept in the trenches. We went on fighting for six days."

"Of course you had to stop for food?"

"This is how it is: when you can, you go and take your turn at the rear to eat and rest, because you don't have anything to eat in the first line, except a little 'monkey.'"

"What is that?"

"Preserved beef in half-pound tins. That does for two. When it is finished you'd willingly have something more to eat; but it lets you go on till night.

"On the seventh day I was done for. A splinter of shell knocked four of us down. In my section, out of fifty-two there were only eight left. Most of them wounded, four or five killed. One would like to see one's family again after the War.

"I remained twenty-four hours on the ground—from eleven o'clock in the morning till the same time the next day. The shells kept any one from coming near. When we saw the hospital people, weren't we just glad! And not a drop of water to drink. We asked everybody that went by if they had any; they said no. All night long there one is, calling out for the stretcher-bearers. What with the cold and the thirst one can't sleep."

27th September.

This morning, at three o'clock, fifteen or twenty seriously wounded French Reservists were brought

in from the Battle of the Aisne, or rather that name is not sufficient, for they were hurt between Noyon and Péronne, between the Oise and the Somme, and they came from Lorraine. The English papers call it the Battle of the Rivers. The chess-board grows daily bigger. The Battle of Mons seemed to us of immeasurable duration, as well as in the number of combatants ; it was exceeded by that of the Marne, and that which has been going on for fifteen days—fifteen days !—surpasses both. And even worse may be foreseen (how can it be ?) for the time when Germany, on her own soil, will face the Allied armies with a desperate resistance !

Serious cases are not always hopeless cases ; the greater number of the newly-arrived will, thanks be to God, recover. They were taken in time, having occurred only the day before yesterday, or even yesterday; with the want of armistices and the German custom of not respecting even ambulances, nothing better can be done.

Half of them are officers, among them a friend of mine I did not recognize at first.

The village he had been ordered to occupy had been reconnoitred by the cavalry and reported empty. A few hundred yards off, feeling all the same a little uneasy, he formed battle-line ; at once German artillery showered shrapnel upon him. He fell amongst the first in front of his troop. It is the habit of our officers ; soon we shall have

none left. There ought to be some limit put to their heroism.

All officers and men alike, lying in our waiting-room, greet the presence of the Chaplain with a kindly look. They went to confession just before the battle. It is the France of former days, as Christian, as brave. A Seminarist sub-lieutenant, promoted on the field of battle, is wounded in the shoulder, the calf, and the hip. He doesn't mind.

"All that I asked of God," he confides to me, "was that I might not lose the fingers of my right hand, so that I might be a priest."

At half-past-six, going to say my Mass, I see the father and mother of my wounded friend coming in. Never shall I forget the look of inquiry they gave me. How delightful it was to be able to call out to them that the wounds were not dangerous!

I can't say as much for all of them, alas! In the gangrene-ward, which leaves but little room for hope, I visit early two new-comers. Like the others who are already there, they think themselves better, they are in less pain, their only complaint is that they can't move their poor leg. They are very peaceful; thank God I can minister to them without making them uneasy. One of them went to confession before the battle; the other just as he started. I simply ask them, and they joyfully consent, to receive Communion to-morrow. The third consents to follow their example; as to the

fourth, a poor Moor, I can only press his hand, look at him affectionately, and pray for him. Like all his compatriots, his courage is wonderful. How have our officers managed to make them love France so dearly already ?

30th September.

Life, even here, begins to run its regular course. Arrival of wounded; touching farewells by a few cured of their injuries, the daily visit to the wards amid the stifled pangs and the brave smiles ; some deaths ; funerals far from home. . . . And over all that, the news of the War, as uniform themselves in their terrible brevity : " The fighting continues."

No doubt we feel that it is going on in our favour ; but the final victory, at what cost it must be won !

I read with much pleasure what Père Janvier said in his sermon at Notre Dame yesterday.

To maintain the justice of our cause, he compared the provocations and outrages of Germany with our love of peace, our respect for the laws of war. He begged us when, victorious, we should pursue the invader to his home, not to make reprisals, but to still the spirit of vengeance and listen to the spirit of Christianity and chivalry, which inspires courage during the battle and pity for the weak in the hour of triumph. I liked especially what he said about the treatment of wounded enemies, commending the care taken of them in France and recalling the

example of Jeanne d'Arc who was always so kind to them.

There are no Germans left here; it is better for them to be attended to together; and our house must be kept open for the English wounded who would take their presence ill.

Before they left, which was pretty soon, I saw several times the two whose coming I mentioned.

They were Reservists from Ainhalt. They were so reserved, so inscrutable, and my German is so imperfect, that in spite of myself my visits were totally uninteresting—a hand-shake, inquiries as to their wounds, wishes for their cure. They appeared to be of a very cramped disposition, so perhaps by saying nothing they expressed themselves wholly.

Another younger man came from Schleswig, he said; very distinguished-looking and speaking English well; but no better than the gross manners of his companions did I like his which were a far from attractive mixture of excessive politeness and a secret disdain. After having, during the whole time of his stay, pretended ignorance of French, he gave himself away the day before he left by calling out with a perfect accent:

"Mais fermez donc cette porte!"

Besides, the dissimulation must have been purely for its own sake, for there was no great secret to spy upon with his American doctor or his nurse.

What fine strength she must have had to show, I don't say in attending to his and his companions' wounds, but in her never-failing courtesy towards them!

Let us show a little courtesy ourselves and admit that all Germans are not like this, and, even if they were, that would be no excuse for our not behaving towards them as befits Christians and Frenchmen. As a Chaplain, I ought at least to be as charitable as some young girls in a midland town who have undertaken the care of enemy-wounded, and one of whom writes to me: "Of course it would be pleasanter to have to do with our own dear men, since we are not allowed to show great attention or kindness. But I think we shall end by breaking that rule, because our hearts are full of devotedness and pity. The race is antipathetic to us, but taken individually it is no longer so, and in these suffering, exiled beings we see brothers. This morning, one of my friends was exchanging a few words with a Bavarian officer, and he said he had fought against the —th.

"At these words she started, and then, in answer to his look of inquiry, she said very low: 'That's my brother's regiment.' A little later, as she was taking him some clean linen, he timidly put out his hand to her."

Six o'clock in the evening. What courage, mon Dieu, what courage! Here is a score, picked up at Aubervilliers, coming from the Somme, and wounded

two or three days ago in the neighbourhood of Albert. Their wounds slightly dressed, and, apparently taken in time, in spite of their serious injuries, they are in wonderfully good spirits.

Of the terribly fierce fight going on down there in which we can with difficulty make a stand against the inexhaustible masses of the enemy, these ragged, hirsute, bleeding heroes make fun as they describe it to us.

Kneeling beside the litters where they wait for their turn to be carried to the bath or to their bed, I listen to these stories, so simple yet so fine.

"For several days there had been sixty of the Company left; yet bullets and shrapnel and everything were raining down, but none came our way. At last we thought it quite a lark."

But all at once something did come their way, a machine-gun was fired a few hundred yards away, and they all fell; not an officer was left.

They are all Reservists, but I don't see how the regulars could have excelled them. They came from Paris, Nancy and la Vendée; different accents but similar courage.

2nd October.

Several of our wounded—a score—have already left the hospital; among them three officers who are to be given the Cross of the Legion of Honour.

"That's just the way I have dreamt of winning it," they say beamingly.

Just now, four decent Reservists went off to the Place, to the Hôtel des Invalides. There they will learn where they are to go to—to the dépôt, or to a Convalescent Home, or again to the Front. They are ready for anything ; but to say that they would not prefer to go home, anyhow for a time, would be an exaggeration. True as it is that I have heard no complaint from a single one of the wounded, it is as true that I have seen but a very small number who wished to go back to the Front ; first our officers and some English and African born fighters, also a few young fellows in our active forces ; never Reservists or heads of families. No doubt, after a period of rest, they too may regain bellicose aspirations, but now they keep a too lively impression of the horrors they have gone through. Even an Englishman—the only one, it is true—said to me : " I loved fighting formerly, but now I've done with it. It's not war, it's murder. There's no pleasure in it."

Before they leave us we give back to our dear guests everything they brought in with them ; generally it's very little, even with those who have managed to retain their haversacks, remains of equipment, a képi of unrecognizable shape ; a great-coat in rags ; trousers mangled by shell-splinters ; everything disinfected but left just as it was. It is the business of the Commissariat to attend to that ; we have something better to do than patching clothes.

Besides, underneath these rags, our friends

leave us clothed in immaculate linen and comfortable woollen garments, privately provided. Flannel jersey, belt and shirt; woollen cap, socks-drawers both warm and light—this will make them remember the hospital, and all the better that they take with them a second set in a small, tightly packed parcel. However respect-worthy, even splendid they may be, their military tatters form a picturesque contrast with this comfort, and one can't help smiling when one sees these brave ragamuffins seating themselves in the most fashionable motor-cars.

Good-bye, friends! A pleasant journey to you, be it to barracks, or to your village, or to the field of battle. It is all done with—the comfort of the hospital; the vision quite vanished—after the perils of war; after the tedious hours of waiting on the field and the fatigue of the ambulance-train—that vision of a Fairy Palace, where amidst light and flowers, wise magicians lulled your fever to sleep and healed your hurts; where the gentle hands of women washed your wounds, smoothed your bed, served you with cool drinks and delicate food. You think pityingly of those others wounded who cried in vain into the night and died a lingering death, for no help came.

Have no fear; they, too, the poor martyrs, have been received in a glorious home, a home even more beautiful and happy, and where there is no return to the troubles here below.

IX

4th October.

YESTERDAY and this morning twenty-three wounded from the battles in the North have come in; the luckiest were hit only two days ago, one or two even only the day before yesterday; the others, three, four or five days ago, with wounds given a hasty dressing, which does little to arrest the progress of the evil. One poor wretch has had a shell-splinter in his thigh for five days; he is suffering from retention of urine; on his hands, which, however, bear no wounds, a kind of abcess has formed, from which matter oozes.

The war grows fiercer and fiercer. Stooping over the stretchers where these peasants, these poor labourers, lie and suffer, I hear stories that would not be out of place in Dante's *Inferno*.

"We were in the trenches; so were the Germans. I spent several days without stirring; as soon as one got up there was the machine-gun."

"But what did you live on?"

"There were cooks not far off. When it was possible they crawled on their bellies and threw

us from far-off bits of bread and meat; and then made off, if they were not killed."

"And you?"

"Me? I had been there since the 24th September."

"Whereabouts?"

"I don't quite know; near Amiens or Arras. They took us there in motors. Everybody dug his hole as quick as he could. When the Engineers came they dug big trenches, but they made a better landmark for the enemy. The best are those made by their shells—more than two yards wide and one deep. They riddled us with shot even in them; but with no great success; if they hadn't had their long-range guns, it would have been all right. Our artillery did damage in their trenches, too, but not from so far off. I think that if we tried to turn them, it was to enfilade them. When you get them end on you kill so many that there are no more to kill.

"We stayed there five days, our elbows on our knees; look, the mark is still left. One night the cannonade seemed to be quieting down. I was sent out reconnoitring. As soon as we were outside it began again; a shell caught me in the arm. The four with me fell dead."

Doubtless it is because they knew themselves lost that the Germans become more and more ferocious. I give place to a Parisian sergeant,

with the gentle, quiet, intelligent countenance of a good fellow who, as they call it, never gets his back up.

"I wouldn't believe what they said about them; I thought they were the exaggerations of journalists. Well—they weren't; it was true, even more than true. They destroy absolutely everything; they set fire to the villages they pass through, before leaving them. Look here; I had a friend who saved four people in a hamlet we came to; they were in the cellar of a house which had been burnt and had fallen in; he made a hole in it and got them out. They bombard houses and churches, even where there are no troops. Every night they fire explosive bombs to set fire to the villages, so as to have a target for their fire. At night the whole horizon is lighted up; you're surrounded by a circle of conflagrations!"

"How frightful!"

"Yes, but that's not the worst of it; it's hearing wounded men calling from the trenches, dying there, without any possibility of helping them—calling on their mother, or their wife."

This last sensation, this grief at having perforce to forsake the wounded, has been described to me I don't know how often. Yesterday again, I hear it from one of the same set of men, an honest Lorrainer from Nancy whom I find in a ward towards the end of the afternoon. I let him unfold his re-

collections freely. He was in the retreat from Morange, and this is the first sentence of his story: "It's sad—those poor wounded fellows begging to be carried away, and there's no way of doing it."

He gives me his impressions of the first battles.

"Before you've fired, you stay where you are, but you're afraid; but when once the firing has begun you go mad, you're not even cautious enough."

He is among those who were brought back from the East.

"And to think that when we got into the train, we thought we were going to rest! It was bad enough in Lorraine, but it was much worse in the North. We were in a village, firing from behind a house; their guns enfiladed the street. I was at the edge of the steps; down came a shell; my shoulder was outside and a splinter pierced it. A comrade beside me was not under shelter; they picked him up in a sack."

I asked him what he thought of this terrible three-weeks' battle, and if he thought the end was approaching.

"I don't know anything about it," he answered. "You're there, you have an object; you stick to it; you don't know what's going on a few hundred yards away."

5th October.

This infernal battle is still going on; but never-

theless there are signs that the end is approaching, and an end in the favour of our Armies. I am not speaking of the silly reports of victories, proved false every morning, only to be invariably repeated every night. Fifty, sixty, a hundred thousand German prisoners; re-entry of the French into Valenciennes, Lille, Maubeuge; von Kluck and his staff taken prisoners three days ago and all carefully concealed from the public (one wonders why). I was glad to see last night that judicial inquiry is to be made as to the misdemeanour of circulating false news.

It was good news, too, that the President of the Republic, M. Millerand and M. Viviani have started on a visit to the Forces. It is good to read that "circumstances allow of this change of plan." These important officials would not be made, or allowed, to come if it were to show them unpleasant matters.

In the way of reassuring news, there is one about which there can be no doubt, and which is worth reporting—the arrival of the Indian troops, of whom a portion have been already fighting for some time, and whose large contingents disembarked at Marseilles last week.

Here are the Hindoos, armed at expense of their great Chiefs, voluntarily hastening to the aid of England; a clear enough answer, I think, to those who accuse that noble country of oppressing them.

Here are, also, the greater number of the English troops that were stationed in India, and, no doubt, Egypt, replaced in these distant lands by new recruits, and sent first to the Front, as inured to war. Those who have enlisted, besides, are getting ready with spirit, and can be seen drilling on all the parade grounds, on all the racecourses in England, Scotland, and Ireland. Private letters have told me of strong contingents even in our Western towns. A million the first year; two millions the second; then three, then four if they are wanted; that is what Lord Kitchener has promised, and with the help of the entire Empire, he will keep his word.[1]

Before accepting the office of War Minister, he had asked for all powers and had received them.

In time, perhaps, the English alone might make an end of Germany; and there is the Tsar, and ourselves. Yes, ourselves; those dear soldiers, those young veterans, who, for two months, have held their own against the most redoubtable army the world ever saw, held their own, and still better, driven it back.

And while in their courage and their endurance they already rival their elders of the Revolution

[1] PS., Feb. 6.—The English people, and that great upright man, have done twice as much as was promised. It was at the beginning of the seventh month that he had got together two million men and was calling for a third.

and the Empire, or to put it better, their elders of all the glory of France, our beloved soldiers are displaying qualities of heart and intelligence that make us thrill with pride and tenderness. They adapt themselves to methods of warfare most contrary to their temperament; they combine initiative with discipline; take the place, if need be, of fallen commanders; go gravely to confession before battle; and, moreover, no danger or privation can quench their gaiety.

This is proved by what their letters, the papers and the stories of the wounded show forth, and there is no need to dwell upon it.

Another fact, that I should like to insist on though it is far from being unknown, is the excellence of their relations with their officers, the affection and devotion they bestow upon them.

Among the things taken out of the pockets of a major, seriously wounded, I remarked a nut.

"That surprises you?" he said. "It was a soldier that gave it to me. When fighting is going on the officers have no time to think of food, so our men provide it. While passing through a village they have time to buy things; in the fields they have time to get hold of things; but we have not. So, first one and then another of his own accord offers us some of what he has got; a bit of bread, chocolate, fruit, sugar. You've no idea how nice they are to us; especially when we're wounded;

however heavy the fire they rush to pick us up. No sooner was I down, for example, than they lifted me up and carried me on two rifles for three miles under a perfect rain of shells. Moreover, it is reciprocal; when wounded, they appeal to us, they call out to their officer: 'Don't leave me!'

"Ah! they're fine fellows!"

And the fine officers, too! Here is a reflection which my major made in passing without realizing its interest.

"War is terrible, but it's fine, too. From the moment he gets his orders to lead his men to the fighting line, the man in command loses all feeling of personal danger; it needs an immense effort at reasoning to keep out of the way even for a second, The thought of his command, his responsibility. completely prevents his thinking about himself."

6th October.

The United States Ambassador has given us another proof of his sympathy to-day by bringing to the hospital the Marquis de Valtierra, the Spanish Ambassador, and the Norwegian Minister, M. Vedel Jarsberg. He seemed to take pleasure in himself showing them his compatriots' generosity. I think that if to ensure victory we conferred with the people of those three countries, we should have no reason to regret our choice. In sympathy with the whole world, the cause of those

who are fighting again Prussianism must be still more dear to those two great democracies of the United States and Norway.

As to Spain, I wager that, were the King not restrained by the Protocol, he would enlist as a sub-lieutenant in the French army.[1]

We have no lack of visitors of distinction. I have not seen all of them, but I can mention General Galliéni, M. Aristide Briand, M.M. Denys-Cochin, Francis Charmes, Charles Benoist, Admiral Bienaimé, and Dr. Landouzy; and there are many other names I forget. If he comes through Paris on his return from the Front, M. Poincaré may perhaps come himself.

7th October.

The President did in fact come through Paris, and came to visit the hospital. He was accompanied by M. Viviani and General Galliéni, with whom he had made a round this morning in the Intrenched Camp. Greeted by the crowd outside with a quiet ovation suitable for so serious a moment, he was received here by the Ambassador, Mr. Herrick, and the members of the Committee.

He was shown the principal works, and went through the wards, rapidly, no doubt, but appearing

[1] PS.—Since these lines were written, information has been received which would make me less assured of the sympathy of Spain, or rather of certain Spanish groups.

to take notice of everything and taking a lively interest in it all. Wounded, doctors, members of the Committee, will all keep a recollection of the sympathy he showed them.

When he left us, the Chief of the State went to the Val-de-Grâce and to a Red-Cross hospital. Yesterday, he was at Head-quarters and with our combatants ; visits to hospitals, visits to the Army—that faithfully represents the feelings of the country, entirely devoted to our soldiers. Full of pride, of confidence and of love, France follows and admires them wherever they are fighting and suffering for her, on the bed of pain in the hospital as in the peril of the battle-field.

X

7th October Continued.

But neither visits nor encouragement can efface the sadness of such sights as I have had before my eyes these last few days.

One only thing, now, seems to me to be desirable —an end to the massacres. And not only does it not seem to be coming, but one can't really wish for it yet; the work of liberation would be left unfinished and it would all begin over again in another ten years.

We are far from the end yet! Yesterday's *communiqué* at 5 o'clock: "Our Front is extending more and more;" at eleven, "Action still more violent."

That is what one has to read after spending hours beside the dying! That means that the cries of pain and the agonies of the wounded, the sobs or dull amaze of families, all these scenes which make one's heart bleed, will be re-enacted a thousand, thousand times through things that are being done at this very moment.

Thousands and thousands of men, fifty thousand, a

hundred thousand—we can't keep count now—are being killed these days, or grievously hurt, like those who die in my arms.

And "the situation remains the same."

Here is my story for yesterday.

At two o'clock in the morning I am called to a major who came in nine days ago with three serious wounds and pneumonia. I find his sister with him.

"He's not in danger?" she implores.

It seems to me that he is. To make certain I ask an English hospital nurse, who tells me that he can't last more than three or four hours. The poor woman stands there, with staring eyes and heaving breast, waiting for my answer. Why should I deceive her? She must know anyhow presently, and if she is unprepared it will be worse for her. I keep silence, but it is enough. She begins to cry; I point to the other patients and take her out into the courtyard. Appeals to her faith at length make her a little calmer. She wants to see her brother again. "Yes, but on condition that you will be brave. There is still a slight hope; emotion might destroy it. Say, as he does, with our Lord: "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." In those words of Divine agony your brother has found strength day by day. He has given proof of an admirable

faith and submission; he has piously received Holy Communion and Extreme Unction. Be worthy of him."

She promised everything, poor creature. And indeed, when she went back to the room, she was silent; but she threw herself on the sick man and kissed him so ardently that he became uneasy in his turn.

It was impossible to let her stay there; I proposed, and she consented, that she should go into the Chapel.

While she was shedding her tears and praying her prayers, I watched beside the dying man. Sublime agony! Whether his mind wandered, or his reason returned, between the priest and him there was no question but of France and God. Even while he was delirious, there were fragments of prayers or military orders.

At one moment I began the Act of Charity: "My God, I love Thee with all my heart . . ." He went on with it to the very end: ". . . And I love my neighbour as myself for love of Thee."

And true it is he loves God, this brave Christian. The night before last again did he not beg for the Communion to help him through the night of fever and suffocation he was beginning to dread? And true it is he loved his neighbour, the valiant soldier who hazarded and sacrificed his life for his country.

At half-past-four, as the end does not seem imminent, I go to the Chapel, and forestalling the usual hour, say the Mass for the Dying for him. I have rarely said a more touching one. The poor sister was the whole congregation and repeated the responses amidst her tears. Afterwards I took her back, calmed and strengthened, to the bed of the dying man; and then I was obliged to go to get a little sleep. When I came back, two hours later, the bed was empty.

In my morning round, I pause, at nine o'clock, at the bedside of a lieutenant from Lyons, of twenty-three, with delicate features, and a very gentle expression, who seems weak but not in danger. After a little talk, during which I hear that all his battalion went to confession before they started, it is arranged that I shall bring him Communion to-morrow morning.

At three o'clock he died, almost suddenly, in the arms of his mother and his young wife; he had been married six months.

They too were noble Christians; I took them to the Chapel while their beloved was being carried into the chamber of the dead. Though accepted with faith and resignation, their anguish was none the less piercing and heart-rending.

At midnight I am waked to go to a young Breton who is dying. The night hospital-attendant is, thank God, an Anglican Ritualist who knows the

value of souls, and who never fails to let me know in cases of necessity. His piety is touching, for he accompanies me as I carry the Eucharist and the oils for Extreme Unction. We go together to the patient, a boy of twenty, pink and white, the face of a baby who suffers and knows not why. But he is a man for strength; the fever is high; he contorts himself, he struggles, he throws off his coverings, he tosses his arms about, but he makes no noise. I speak to him; he listens—so prettily! I give him absolution, the Sacrament of the Sick, and stay praying beside him. The restlessness does not cease; he asks for drink; they bring him a cup of water which he thrusts away: "That's too little; I want quarts!"

I take his hand, I propose Holy Communion, the Visit of our Lord. "Yes, yes; I am quite willing!" I make haste, for his disordered movements increase and may be the last. As soon as the host has touched his lips and a little water has taken it down, he grows quiet, clasps his hands, closes his eyes, and for ten minutes in angelic peace, he remains lifted above the troubles of this world. Then the restlessness returning, an injection sends him to sleep and I go back to my bed, if not to my slumbers.

When I saw him this morning, he was a little better, and they were beginning to hope. His uncle had come with his young sister; she is exactly like him and he has no more of a warlike

look than she has. Poor children ! they are orphans. If she has to see him die, her little brother !

At noon yesterday I lost one of the patients to whom I was most attached and who was also very fond of me. A professor of thirty from Lyons, a lieutenant in the Reserves, and father of three children. He showed me the photograph in which they made a pretty group with his young wife, his mother, and himself—a picture never more to be seen. He was attacked by gangrene ; one of his legs had been completely amputated ; but the sacrifice was useless ; it could not stop the deadly ravages. Unknown to himself the disease increased ; so much did it deceive him, that feeling less and less pain, he believed he was nearing recovery.

It was heart-breaking to hear him expressing his hopes, when we knew the truth and watched his poor features growing thinner, more discoloured, already taking on a corpse-like appearance. Still his eyes flamed with life, his whole soul took refuge there, like a queen in her last-left fortress while enemies invade her territory.

Those too brilliant eyes deceived his family who come from far away ; even yesterday his wife was still mistaken about them. Warned early this morning, the poor girl, with her aunt, came a quarter of an hour too late.

They sent her to me first.

" But is it really serious, Monsieur l'Aumônier ? "

"Yes, my child; very serious."

Sobbing, she begs to go to him at once.

I make a sign to the aunt to go first; and little by little, my silence, my looks show her the truth. I told her of his peaceful end, his last words after receiving Extreme Unction: "If I should die, tell my dear wife I died as a good Christian, and that I leave my blessing for the children."

She wants to see him, to kiss him. While I hesitate—the reason can be guessed—the aunt comes back. She has not seen him herself; he was no longer in his room among the living but in the chamber of the dead, and wrapped in his shroud.

After they have wept in each other's arms, I persuade the two poor women not to go into that dismal place where what remains is not himself, who is with God, and with them unseen, and whom they must always remember under the gentle shape they loved.

And like other mourners, I took them to the Chapel. Near the Christ, the Compassionate, and the Dispenser of Eternal Life, their grief was stilled by degrees to resignation and divinely turned to hope.

11th October.

What it is like to be wounded; suddenly, in full possession of one's powers, to be stopped as by a thunderbolt; when consciousness returns, after

the shock, to find oneself covered with blood, one knows not why; to understand what has happened only when one is carried off; to ask of others what is the matter with you and if it is serious; to be laid upon the mattress of a motor-ambulance, taken to the hospital, taken an inventory of by the doctor; to feel the following night more and more weary, while the hurt seems to gain ground, and insomnia is made hideous with nightmare—such is the experience I went through three days ago, reduced, I hasten to say, to its strictest minimum; and yet, even so, instructive enough to make me enter better into the trials of my dear soldiers.

That is why I mention it; apart from that it has to do with nothing but a commonplace motor-accident.

While I was going over to the other side of the Seine, to receive the body of one of our dead at the new cemetery at Neuilly, my little car was run into at a crossing by an enormous dray that had not condescended to sound its horn or to take notice of ours. The two brakes, put on at the same time, confined the damage to the shaking up of our machine, the shivering of the wind-screen on my head, and the violent collision of my person with that of the chauffeur. The breaking of my eye-glasses, some small cuts made by the glass above the eye, and a bigger one near the ear; the bruising

of certain nerves and muscles, bore witness that, but for the Divine protection, I might have been much more injured, and instead of going to the cemetery for some one else, have had to take myself there.

If this small, small experience could give me some idea of the shock and the first effects of certain woundings of the victims of battle, there is no comparison possible as to the time that follows. Leaving out of account that their injuries are otherwise serious, the soldiers must sometimes remain for long hours, if it be not days, on the spot where they fell, or else drag their torn limbs to look for a dressing-station; if they find none, they lie down in the shelter of a rock, a wood, an empty house. And when help comes—supposing it does come—the wound is twenty times more serious and often even incurable. . . .

My thoughts go back to my dear sufferers from gangrene, and I am ashamed to have thought about myself.

One of the nurses who devote themselves to them, coming to see me this morning, I asked for news of them and if they were not too greatly affected by the lieutenant's death.

"Too greatly? No," she replied, "I might even venture to say, not enough. When he was carried out they hardly took any notice and said not a word. And it was just the same the other day,

when that poor Englishman died. One would suppose that their personal sufferings and danger made them egotistical. They make me think of the poultry in a farm-yard when one is taken for the kitchen and the rest go on pecking away as if nothing had happened."

The indifference of our patients must indeed be great to give such an opinion of them to the nurse, one of the gentlest and most compassionate of women. I tell her that she is wrong to judge by appearances, and that at bottom, if they display no emotion at the death of their neighbours, it may be because they are really feeling too much, and don't want to look too close at the horrible ending if they are in the same case.

I could not convince her, but when I met her again: "You were right," she said; "I was unjust to them. Imagine, they did not know. An indiscreet visitor has just told N. of the death of the lieutenant; he had had no idea of it and is much upset about it. As soon as a patient has breathed his last, they turn back the sheet over his head and carry him to the mortuary; the rest think only that he is being taken to another room."

Go on thinking so, my poor friends; it is not I that will undeceive you. Your mistake, moreover, is not very far from the truth. He who is carried away is, as you well say, taken to another room; his body is going to be put into a narrow and dark

dwelling-place, nailed down between four boards, his dazzled soul soars into infinite spaces of light.

19th October.

The consequences of my accident have lasted a little longer than I expected. For ten days I have been obliged to confine my movements and occupations to what was absolutely necessary. But for the daily massage of the bruised muscles, I should have felt the effects for several weeks.

The interruption in these notes therefore means nothing but stiffness in their writer. Around him nothing is altered, neither afar off, where the War, alas ! continues its ravages, nor near at hand in the hospital, where its victims are always being received. But, indeed, it is true that in the interval a great misfortune has put France into mourning—the death of the Comte de Mun. To all of us who love our country and the Church, both in word and action, he was a source of strength in the midst of many trials ; now, who will help us to bear up against the trial of losing him at such a moment ? Who ? He himself still, by his works, of which the most fruitful and the most recent, that of the appointment of free military Chaplains, might suffice for a saint's glorification ; by the example he gave of the services that may be rendered to all, even to the public authorities, by a believer as free from human respect as from bitterness ; a

Christian whose charity never ceased to equal his faith, and finally by the universal harmony he created around his grave; where all parties vied in admiration; where the regret of all men with hearts and the homage of the Chief of the Church as well as of the Chief of the State, met together; a meeting such as has been till now exceedingly rare, but still possible as was thus shown, and which has become, thanks to him, less difficult to bring about.

On the fifteenth we received, from the station at Achères, one of our most important convoys, twenty wounded, for the most part sent on from the hospitals at Arras and Saint-Pol, some of them recently hurt.

Here is one, for instance, that was wounded only on the 12th, but very badly.

"Were you hit in the trenches?"

"No; after spending three days in them without budging, we had just come out for a change of troops. We went through Saint Eloi, near Arras; in the middle of the villages, a big shell came upon us, one of those that burst in the air. Ten of us were struck; two seriously wounded; as for me, I got nine or ten splinters—in the head, the arms, the calves and the feet."

"Is there nothing in your back?"

"I was forgetting—yes, a little one in my shoulder, not dangerous."

This is a sturdy Lorrainer from Arsweiler, near Blamont, who had emigrated so as to do his service in France.

Two days after his arrival, now installed in his white bed, he told me his story afresh, laughing over his collection of bullets, shrapnel, shell-splinters.

"It's a museum of your own," I answered to hide my admiration of him.

Another, less lucky, was first taken to the hospital at Arras, where the number of doctors was insufficient for the yield of the unceasing fight. Hurt in the knee, he was perhaps a little neglected in favour of the more serious cases. When the wound began to fester and had extended to the thigh, the doctor attended him and even proposed amputation, which he tried to refuse. More energetic measures then appeared to diminish the disease, but then came the bombardment of the hospital, and he had to spend four days in the damp cellars. Fancy the confusion amongst a staff already overworked! They sent off as many patients as possible. Our soldier was put into the ambulance train. When he arrived here, and the doctor had inspected him our Surgeon in Chief was summoned. The draining-tubes were changed for the first time for a week, and the amputation was decided on as soon as rest and his strength would enable him to endure it.

It is nobody's fault, but all the same, here is yet

another Frenchman who, for want of proper attention, is to lose one of his limbs, if not his life.

Rather fewer deaths; only two or three in the week; another this morning, from that horrible tetanus which had spared us for some time, thanks to the injections of serum, which have been lately more frequent; a poor young soldier of twenty that his day-nurse, an American here, used to call in motherly fashion by his Christian name, André, and I did the same. His uncle in Paris saw him, but his parents got here from the country two hours too late. They, too, wanted to look upon him once more; we gave way, after explaining everything to them, and on condition that they did not kiss him.

How cruel, that necessary precaution!

We held the poor mother and father by the arm while the white sheet was lifted. Thank God! his expression was still sweet and peaceful; but the colour already. . . .

"My darling, my poor darling, to think that's you! My poor darling, my poor darling, my poor darling. . . ."

We knelt to recite the Lord's Prayer.

"Thy will be done," was in it. I added nothing to it. Afterwards we went to the Chapel, and then to the office; the father wanted to give something to the nurse. The mother spoke of her last parcel sent to the young soldier.

"Stockings and a vest I knitted myself, and he wrote that that kept him nice and warm."

They had brought a sheet from home, a beautiful sheet, quite new, fearing greatly what had really happened; unluckily they had left it at the uncle's, and there could be no delay. Not to be able to carry him away at once, but to leave him till after the War, was very hard, too. But they understood, and submitted. They submitted to it all—the purpose of God and the laws of the country. O, the brave folk! but how sad it is! What great things ought to be brought forth by such sacrifices!

At two o'clock I ministered to the poor paralysed man whose brain had been laid bare, and now we have lost him. His life was torture to him, and yet his death grieves me like a personal loss. I never went through the big ward he was in without saying a word to him, without asking him one or two questions to which he answered yes, very low; and I felt, I saw, in his eyes that my short visit gave him pleasure. How much better off, my friend, you will be with God, Who inspired me with this affection for you!

21st October.

Contrary to what we had been led to expect, André's parents were allowed to take him away after the ceremony. It is a happy change and one that it would be very desirable to see made

general. "They took them away from us while they were alive; at least let them give them back to us when they are dead!" said a young wife, heart-broken at having to go back without her husband's body.[1]

It is long since I wrote anything about the events of the War. It develops to such an extent that my poor notes in face of it seem like an ordinary photographic apparatus in front of an immense landscape; they are too small to reflect it. My impressions are the same as those of the rest of the world—a mixture of confidence and dejection; relief when there is a success of the Allies, and sadness at the thought that it will last so long, and that thousands of men are being killed or wounded day by day without interruption.

Besides, I rarely receive now any other news but what is in the papers; I speak of the English papers; for as to the French ones, they are kept far too much in leading-strings.

What harm could it do, for instance, to let the details of operations completely finished be known, and, when they are several weeks old, the many fine exploits, collective or individual, which satisfy both the imagination and the heart? Always the same system of treating men like children, when,

[1] PS.—Since permission has been given for their removal, another difficulty remains in the case of poor people—the cost of transport; and one must return without the precious remains. . . .

on the contrary, children should be treated like men.

But rather more special news I have had, yesterday concerning Germany, to-day, England.

One of my friends had found means, after many difficulties, to take back to Switzerland two little Germans who were with him at the beginning of the War. He put them into the hands of their father, with whom he was for some time, and who expressed a very natural gratitude to him; and he was able to discover the state of mind that reigns in Berlin. It is not the sense of discouragement we fancy—far from it. Antwerp makes up for Paris, and final success is anticipated as firmly as with us. It remains to be seen what will happen when the truth is known there.

As to our friends, the English, they are doing things with a vengeance; it is said that they are hiring their military buildings at Nantes and other places on terms of three years. There's determination for you! Still it does not prevent, anyhow just now, some nervousness. While refusing to take literally the German boasts of invasion, they look with no pleasure on the prospect of a bombardment of London by Zeppelins. Westminster after Reims, a fine addition to the picture of German *Kultur*. Can it be true that the famous Abbey has been insured for £150,000? I don't say that it isn't worth double that; but that's an idea we should never have had.

As a precaution, I prefer that which is beginning to be taken against William's subjects living in England. If there are more than fifty thousand of them capable of bearing arms, it would be a fine asset for the enemy in case of invasion. Putting idle fancies aside, circumstances might be conjectured when the danger would become a real one; circumstances such as the seizure of the Channel ports by the Germans; aërial raids; storms scattering the Fleet.

And what is known about preparations made beforehand by the genius for spying that characterizes the enemy? Concrete platforms awaiting the big howitzers; concealed apparatus for wireless telegraphy; individual treachery secured in likely spots. We pretty well know now the cause of the fall of Maubeuge.

Certainly England did not wait for this beginning of personal danger to prove herself a valiant and helpful Ally; we shall never forget what we owe to her fleet, nor the part her army took in stopping the invading troops. But it appears that the occupation of Antwerp and Ostend, the attempt on Dunkirk, the coveting of Calais, in short, the manifest plan of getting as near as possible to the English coast, have acted on her already roused distrust as the best possible stimulants. The number of enlistments, I was told by a doctor who has just come back from London, increases with

danger; stationary in times of success, it rises as soon as the Allies appear to be losing.

But let us leave all that; one fact stands out above all else. In response to Lord Kitchener's call, the English did not wait for the descent of the enemy along the Belgian coast-line. I think there are not many peoples in the world who would give at one stroke five hundred thousand volunteers. And here they are nearing a million.

England, like France, Russia, and sainted Belgium, has gone into it with her whole heart and strength, all her men and all her resources; Germans and Austrians may feel sure about that. That is why we shall not lose confidence. Even if it so happened—may God forbid!—that we lost the great battle being fought for several days between the sea and the Oise. It is said to be more important and more bloody than all the previous ones. It troubles the imagination, and the coast from Calais to Ostend looks all red to me.

24th October.

Half our ambulances started for the North the morning before last; they were not quite certain where, but alas! only too surely to come upon great carnage. Our brave friends have obtained authority to go to the Front, even under fire, to glean their bloody harvest.

Five o'clock in the evening. The chief officer of

the expedition has just returned; he brought no wounded with him. Our cars are very far away, one can't tell where; they are working on the field of battle. They take their convoys to dressing-stations, clearing hospitals, ambulance-trains, and then return to the Front to look for other victims. There are many, many; more than can be helped immediately; and they are being cut down without a break.

27th October.

To-night came in three wounded from Dixmude; they had left the ambulance-train at Juvisy. The aspect of the War changes; more sanguinary than ever, it has the advantage, if it be one, of re-appearing in the open air. They are killing each other in the fields, along the rivers and canals, on the shores of the sea; they are killing each other in the towns and villages, taken, re-taken, plundered, destroyed from top to bottom. I was about to say that this is a change from the war in the trenches; but, in fact, that goes on none the less on all the rest of the immense front.

Here is a marine from Cherbourg (and it is a proof of the uprooting of all things), who, before fighting at Dixmude, had been at Ghent, and, a few days earlier, at Reims. He joined the Army in the middle of August, as a volunteer, like all his battalion. He was wounded three days ago, on the 24th,

at two o'clock; a bullet broke the bone of his arm. The shock made him fall into a brook, fortunately not deep, where he remained several hours, projectiles falling fast into it. In spite of his wound, he tried to get off his haversack; it was a long and painful business, but he succeeded, and used it for a shield for his head. Sheltered thus from bullets, he quickly began to run other risks. The Germans set fire to a tank of petrol, and the dangerous liquid began to run into the brook. Our friend greatly fears that several wounded men who were lying near him, among them his captain, must have been burnt. As for him, in spite of the loss of blood which had weakened him, he managed to climb up on to the bank, but only to find himself close to the German lines, which had advanced. He dragged himself a few hundred yards, obtained the assistance of a comrade, and at last reached the French ambulance. A motor-car took him to Furnes, where he was put into an ambulance-train going to Orleans. At the end of two days of exhausting travelling, his weakness necessitated his being set down at Juvisy. We hope to make him all right again.

I asked him if he had seen the English ships that had taken part in the battle; but he had only heard the reports of their guns, and he declared that they did enormous damage among the massed troops of the enemy. Another of our three wounded,

who also went to Dixmude on leaving Reims, but by Paris and Dunkirk, saw them distinctly as he went along the shore, and even from the spot where he was fighting.

To-day's paper tells us that some of our submarines are there, too.

The climax is reached; engines of war come alike from the earth, the air, and the waves; and there are others that travel underground to blow up trenches, towns, barracks, forests, everything where human life is found. Science is mistress of the world!

Forgive me if I let a cry of bitterness escape my lips!

To-day is not cheerful. To the three wounded of last night, four others were added at one o'clock, and we expect twenty this evening. Of course we receive them gladly; we should like to look after a hundred times as many. But when they come in blood-stained and disfigured; when one sees what war has made of them, how can one help detesting it, that worker of suffering and death? How can one think without horror that it still goes on, more strenuous than ever, and that no one knows when it will stop?

And then, my little Breton that was thought out of danger; my little Breton, so gentle, so patient under his great sufferings—the one that was so like his young sister—is not going on at all well. His

leg is no longer curable, and the disease is spreading over his whole body; every spot is painful to the touch; if he leans too long on one side, sores begin to open in it. In short, there must be amputation. He understood that himself and even asked to have it done yesterday while there was some hesitation in proposing it to him. I stayed with him a little while this morning, and saying nothing about the Sacraments which I had administered to him a few days ago, I simply said my morning prayers with him, like a mother with her child.

The amputation was performed at two o'clock, and I hear that he bore the operation well, but came out of it very weak, and must not yet be spoken to.

28th October.

At half-past six I was allowed to see him; at seven, he was dead.

He just gently stopped living, "like a poor little bird," said his nurse, who was likewise fond of him, a kind mother who has three sons in the Army. Our French assistants and our American nurses supplement each other admirably; neither care for the body nor care for the soul fail our patients.

"That's right; hold my hand!" the little Breton used to say to his French nurse, when the pain was too great.

At the last, she wept as if he had been one of

her own, as did the American nurse too, I feel bound to say, lest the look, perhaps intentional, of professional stiffness, should be misleading.

One after the other, and hour after hour through almost the whole night, the cars we have left have been bringing in fresh wounded. They fetch from the station those who look the most wretched, those that have to be taken out of the ambulance train, because it is quite out of the question for them to go as far as the towns in the Centre, the South, or the West for which they were set down. You can imagine what awful things we see.

I gave the Sacraments to two last night, soon after they arrived. One died without regaining consciousness, and the other is but little better. A third, who had gangrene and seemed dying, gives us a little hope now that he has been dressed, a dressing that was very like an operation. If he had come in two hours later, it was to the mortuary that he would have had to be taken.

30th October.

In these last few days we have taken in fifty. For none of them did I feel greater pity than for a poor Reservist hit by a bullet that went through his forehead from right to left, severing the optic nerve and closing his eyes for ever. He does not yet know the extent of his misfortune. "If only I see clearly again after the dressing!" he keeps

on saying; and so far no one has had the courage to crush his last hope—I no more than the others.

Two others of the wounded of the day before yesterday had been blinded by the plaster from a high wall along which they were taking shelter, and which had been knocked down by a shell; they have both begun to see a little again to-day. But it's no good deluding oneself; the case of the first is final; he will be for ever in darkness.

When he learns it, my God, inspire me with words of resignation. What can I do, or say? It frightens me beforehand. My God, I will pray that Thou wilt work upon his heart without the intervention of Thy minister.

XI

31st October.

It is already too marvellous that Thou deignest so often to make use of us; in most of the phases of existence, Thou dost associate men with Thy actions; Thou attachest them to Thyself and unites them together in a constant solidarity. Thou usest parents to give life, and, while it is yet fragile, to sustain it; Thou usest masters to instruct and to transmit to the new-comers the heritage of the past; Thou usest social organization to give to each an easier, finer, and higher fate. But that Thou shouldst use men too for the spreading and developing in other men of supernatural grace, part of Thy truth, Thy love, Thy holiness, a right, a beginning of admittance into Thy infinite happiness—that is what astonishes, crushes, plunges into an abyss of confusion and gratitude, us Thy priests. And yet that is how it is. We almost lose consciousness of it in the exercise of a ministry which is always the same; but when new conditions arise and make us forsake our routine, we perceive afresh the superhuman greatness of the powers confided to us and we tremble as we use them.

I had this experience to-day as I dispensed the grace of the Divine Forgiveness.

The Feast of All Saints and All Souls ; no better occasion could offer. Many confessed so as to communicate. I proposed it first to those whose wounds give some cause for anxiety ; but to numbers of others, too. And it is in the choice of these last, as in the way to approach their minds, that I most feel the action of something higher of which I am only the instrument. I hesitate to make a comparison which sounds profane, but it is so exact a one ! Well, yes, I am like a medium in the hands of the mesmerist; I feel a sort of current from on high pass into me which guides me by preference into such or such a ward ; stops me at one bed rather than another ; suggests to me the words I ought to say ; and when the moment comes for the Sacramental formula, transfuses from my soul to the other a secret virtue, a spiritual strength, a grace.

1*st November.*

Ten o'clock. I really believe that at Mass this morning not a soldier able to walk nor a Catholic nurse was missing.

Although that did not make up a large congregation, there were, as the Epistle for All Saints says : "Of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues" ; French, English and American women ; soldiers of our own, from England, from Scotland, from Ireland

and Africa, clothed according to their countries or their dressings, several brought in in armchairs and by the help of crutches; others with an arm in a sling, or a bandaged head.

And it was for them, for their families, for their dead that I had to say a few words on the Gospel for the day, the opportune gospel of the Beatitudes: "Blessed are they that weep, for they shall be comforted."

Many received Communion in the Chapel; many received it after Mass in their wards; and it was good of Christ to go to find our wounded on their bed of suffering. Almost everywhere, He had picked out the most tried; and in one ward where each one was in danger—that of the patients suffering from gangrene—He tarried with all. And, after His divine passing, the door of that sad limbo was left ajar upon Paradise.

Nine o'clock at night. When we had already passed from the twilight of All Saints to the night of the Feast of All Souls, a poor soldier of twenty came to us, who himself looked like an apparition from beyond the grave, yellow, emaciated, eyes bright with fever, and in a quiet, expressionless voice, mixing up sensible answers with the ramblings of strong delirium.

"Ward 69," says the doctor without hesitation. It is the gangrene ward.

He is so bad that I think it right to stay there

during the first dressings. So he is undressed. Horrible sight! It must be days since he was attended to. From the thigh which received the initial wound, black and blue patches have begun to spread over his body. How shall I put it? The evening breeze through the wide open windows is not enough to make the air fit to breathe. Poor humanity! Can this one be saved! The dressing done, I could see him alone but for a couple of minutes.

Probably—I am not sure, being unwilling to tire him with useless questions—probably his story is the same as those of fifteen or twenty others who have come to us the last few days, and who, driven away from the hospital at Arras by the bombardment, have since lived in carts and farms, in trains and stations, until, at the end of their strength, they have been deposited on a platform to be taken away by some ambulance.

I don't say this as a reproach. It is war! and one can do nothing to prevent it. But, because it is what it is, cursèd be War!

2nd November.

Here is another, who arrived yesterday at two o'clock and who, I am told, is liable to a sudden increase of danger. To look at him you would not say so, and he insists on talking.

"I had been in the military hospital at Arras

since the 4th October," he tells me; "with a wound in my arm and my leg broken. Eventually, they bombarded us every day; a doctor, a sister and a nurse were struck by splinters of shell; at the civil hospital twenty were killed. On Thursday night, we had to leave; I was put with some others, into a cart; that gives you a fine shaking. We got to an empty farm where there was nothing to eat or drink; we stopped there for two days, lying on straw. Then we took the train to the place where your car picked us up."

"That was at Aubervilliers, wasn't it? How are your wounds?"

"My arm is healed, and my leg was much better, but the journeys did for it. Now it is going on all right; they have just fixed it."

I take this opportunity to encourage him by enlarging on the knowledge and devotion of our doctors and nurses. But for the moment he can think of only one thing—the ending of the nightmare.

"Yes, indeed, you are well off here; you don't hear the guns now."

He did nothing but fight for the first two months, and since then, in the hospital, he could hear the never-ceasing noise of the fighting. La Bassée, the central point of this furious battle, is two and a half miles from Arras, and even on Arras itself the shells fell in swarms.

"There was one that broke the glass partition close to me in the dressing-ward. A barrowful fell on to my bed."

I question the doctors; his leg, which was beginning to heal, will have to be amputated; and his neighbour, who had had the same unlucky experiences, will probably lose an arm which had been saved.

When we read in the papers that ambulances are fired on, this is what it means—not counting those who are again struck, or killed outright.

If faith did not shed its soothing radiance over all these miseries, and lift the veil of something better beyond, I know not how one's heart, unless it grew hard, could endure it all. But that Divine Consoler is there, holding out His arms to all those who mourn, pointing out to them the Heaven where God gives Himself as reward for the sacrifices, and where they will once more find with Him, never again to be separated, those they rightly loved. Thanks to that faith, if we are not, and ought not to be, exempt from suffering, at least let us not suffer, let us not weep, like those who have no hope.

It is that text of St. Paul's that, this morning, at the Mass of the Dead, I expounded to my dear congregation, as numerous as yesterday's, and even more devout. I had left around the altar the flowers, of sober hues, of yesterday's Feast-day,

with the wish that their fragrance might supplement the meaning of the black vestments I was wearing, and show that death, side by side with its mournful aspects, more frequent now than ever, possesses, too, others, very sweet, very beautiful, even splendid.

And it came into my head to describe the ceremony of the *Souvenir Français*, as it was celebrated in the Cemetery at Metz on the 7th September, 1871, in the presence of forty thousand Lorrainers met together for the first time after the annexation; and I quoted the address of Mgr. Dupont des Loges, which, amidst indescribable emotion, ended with this same text, full of Christian as well as patriotic sentiment: "That you be not sorrowful, even as others who have no hope."

Six o'clock in the evening. I have once more seen proof of the strength of religious sentiment this evening when I went again to see a Breton Reservist who was to receive Communion on Sunday, and who, I was told, had been greatly exhausted by constant hæmorrhage.

When I asked him how he was, he answered calmly:

"It's going badly; I feel I am going to die."

I questioned the nurse, who did not think there was immediate danger.

So I tried to reassure him.

"No," he answered, still quite calmly; "I know quite well that I am going to die."

"And if it were so, you are a Christian."

"I am not afraid of death."

I proposed to him then that he should receive at once the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, that he had intended to receive next Sunday.

"So that no grace may be wanting to you, we will add Extreme Unction between the two, and then I will leave you in the company of our Lord."

"Yes, I shall be very glad."

His acts of thanksgiving over, he asked the nurse to read him three letters he had just received from his family. Kind as our American ladies are and so well up in our language, they were not accustomed to the style of writing he confided to them, so I offered to take their place, and I read out loud the letters from his sisters and one from his uncle. If the grammar did not count for much, in nobility of mind, in greatness of soul, in faith, in simplicity, they equalled the best that have been published.

One of the sisters wrote from Nantes to tell him that the mother and uncle, who had been to see him, had had a good journey back.

"They would have liked to give us better news of your health. But could it be expected? We must not lose courage. *Le Bon Dieu* is trying us, but will not forsake us. We share in your sufferings, and hope that in a few more days you will be better. Don't tire yourself by writing to us; when you feel able, just put a word into the nurse's letters."

A sister who had remained in the village expressed, a little more awkwardly, very similar sentiments, and added that she would much like to see him: "I assure you that if I were accustomed to travel, I would start quite by myself; only the distance is so great." And in a postscript: "I forgot to tell you that you must not be too much troubled about us, for André (the farm-hand) is not taken; he is put on half-pay and is staying on with us."

The uncle, who had come to see him, writes: "I send you just a word to tell you that we got back safely. They were all waiting impatiently for me; I gave news of you to the family. I wish I could have said that you were getting on well, but how could I? I did like you, I told them everything at once. Well, your sisters at H—— thanked me and preferred my telling them the truth at once. The only thing they long for is to have you with them as soon as possible. My dear Joseph, up to now you have been very brave, you have suffered much calmly and with resignation. That is well. *Le Bon Dieu* is asking a great sacrifice, it is true, but in His mercy He will grant you graces greater than you think of."

Then follow details about his sisters and the farm life, then tidings of the young fellows of the district, and the letter ends thus: "Come, dear Joseph, take courage; I shall not forget you in my daily

prayers. When you feel able, let me have a few words, it will be a great pleasure to me to have news of you. But don't tire yourself by writing to me. Give my respects to the kind nurse who seems so good to you and to the other good medical officers, who look so kind."

Nothing is altered in these extracts but the spelling; the story is given verbatim, and, most certainly, stands in no need of correction.

It was ten o'clock when I left my patient, already a little drowsy, his mind and heart filled full of his God and his family, dreaming of his place at Church and his place at home.

"To-morrow then!" I had said to him a few minutes earlier.

"I don't know if I shall be here," he answered.

And, emboldened by his serene faith, I added with a smile: "After all, if you wake up in the presence of the good God, there'll be no great harm done. It will be as good as being here."

And he answered me with a "yes" I shall not forget. If he dies, my good Breton peasant, no doubt I shall pray for him as I have promised, but still more shall I pray to him for myself and those I love.

When I left him, I went and knelt down in the upper gallery of our Chapel. It was well, in the great silence of the middle of the night, to end there the Feast of the Dead.

My father, my sister, my grandparents, my friends, those whom I had attended in their agony—especially during these last two months—I recommended them all to the infinite mercy of Christ, the Judge and Saviour hidden in the tabernacle, His Divine presence quietly shown by the symbolic shining amidst the darkness of a little lamp.

Opposite me, against the great windows giving on the street the wind shook the branches of the trees, and autumn leaves, distinct because less dense, knocked upon the panes like a swarm of suppliant souls.

3rd November.

I have found my Breton's faith in two wounded men from the East, one from Mouzon in the Ardennes, the other from Belfort.

Wounded is not the word; mutilated is what one ought to call it, so wretched is the state of their poor bodies, or rather of what is left of them. One can't really wish for their recovery, when one thinks of the life they will have to lead. Their martyrdom, impossible to describe and which they accept with the patience of saints, will soon open to them an eternity of light and Divine happiness.

I have not yet given them Extreme Unction; but, before being taken into the operating-theatre, they both went to confession and received the Eucharist in admirable dispositions.

They are men of about forty. My poor twenty-year old patient with gangrene, still more surely condemned to death, it seems, can't resign himself as they do. I was able to persuade him to confess and communicate yesterday because of the feasts of All Saints and All Souls, but I recognized that there was no question of anything more. I saw him again this evening at nine o'clock, clinging more and more to the belief that he would recover, and unable to endure the splendour of the Great Vision.

A little ray of sunshine has shone through the misty atmosphere of these days. In the middle of the afternoon a magnificent present arrived : " From the City of Paris ; the last flowers from Bagatelle."

And, in a big wicker basket, the old gardeners brought in sixteen magnificent bunches of roses, freshly-cut autumn roses of sweet, delicate, and exquisite fragrance.

It was a charming idea of M. L. C——, the superintendent of our staff of nurses, that the distributing of the bouquets by wards was not made till after the two gardeners had carried the whole basketful through them all.

Chacun en a sa part, et tous l'ont tout entier. Each one has his share, and every one has the whole.

Called at one o'clock in the morning to a patient who is dying without regaining consciousness, I take the opportunity of seeing my young gangrene

patient again. The conversation is very amiable, and the idea of receiving the Sacrament for the Sick is about to be agreed to, when an imprudent word from a nurse who does not understand the nuances of our tongue, brings forth an astonished refusal and makes me decide to beat a final retreat. There must be no more question of it, and I reassure the patient before leaving him, promising only to pray for him at Mass. As soon as it is said I return. He has of his own accord said his morning prayers· I thank God for this good inclination, and don't risk jeopardizing it by asking for more than His grace seems to offer.

At nine o'clock the parents arrive. At first alarmed at the change in him they are re-assured by seeing how little he is suffering, and soon leave him, as they suppose, to rest. When at two o'clock they come back, suddenly sent for, their child is dead. Their grief is awful; the father controls himself, but the mother cries aloud. They are taken to the Chapel, and I am sent for.

The poor woman who was wandering up and down with outstretched arms, rushes towards me and declares that it can't be; it isn't possible that her son is dead—a boy like that, so healthy, so handsome, so amiable; she wants me to re-assure her, to say that I agree with her. My silence and the tears that come into my eyes, only increase her lamentations, and nothing can calm her.

"But what will become of us? He was all we had!"

Nothing can appease her, neither my words of Christian hope nor anything the father endeavours to say. For a moment she is interested in the account I give of the pious dispositions of the poor boy, of his Communion yesterday and his prayers this morning; but she speedily falls again into a frenzy, and I suggest to the husband to give her something to do, to make a diversion in some way or other, all the more, I add, because I am obliged to leave them for a funeral.

She hears that word of mine.

"I won't have him taken away from me! You're not going to bury him at once!"

I gently explain to her that no one is thinking of such a thing, and that, on the contrary, I am going to take her to those who will let her see her child again. And, in fact, we go to the office, and then I go down in haste to begin the funeral service for another.

On my return I hear that they saw their son such as death had made him, and that, hearing the cries of the mother, three other women, already upset by visiting their own wounded, and by the sight of the funeral, had fallen down in a faint.

One coffin is carried away while another is being closed; a mother, a wife, who have just seen son or husband seriously hurt, as they return from the

ward, come across a funeral procession; parents themselves lamenting, hear lamentations issuing from the chamber of the dead. That is what one sees of the War in a hospital!

5th November.

To recover somewhat from the sight of the dying, the dead, the afflicted families, one has but to talk with the wounded themselves. They must be very low indeed before they complain or lose their good humour; some there are that keep to the very last their soldier-like spirit, their Christian equanimity.

Yesterday morning it was an adjutant through whose palate and cheeks a bullet had gone, who welcomed me even more cheerfully than the rest, and who, in spite of the difficulty of expressing himself, managed to make me understand that he was a priest and had even celebrated Mass two days before he was wounded.

And merrily he pulled out of his military notebook for my edification a *celebret* of the Bishopric of Moulins, in which I read that he was *vicaire* at Saint-Pierre de M——, a *celebret* to be kept as a relic, with its blood-stained edges. He can't receive Communion yet—he can hardly manage even to drink—but he can walk and already came to Mass this morning. Let us hope he will soon help me as my assistant. His success would be certain.

This afternoon I heard the story of a Reservist

who came in two days ago. There is something tragic in its simplicity.

"My Company left its trenches to make an attack last Thursday, 9th October, at nine o'clock at night. It had to retire, broken up by machine-guns. I was left there with one broken leg and a bullet through the other, as well as a bullet in my back."

"Were you alone?"

"No; there were two of us; the other's dead, I think. I spent the night where I lay, five or six yards from an empty trench. The next day my Company came back and I thought I was saved; but it failed again; half of my comrades were wounded or killed and the Germans took the rest. Because of the bullets and the shells, I had dragged myself into the empty trench. It was Friday morning; I remained there till Sunday evening with nothing to drink nor to eat, and I could not stir for the state of my leg.

"It was between the two firing-lines about 50 metres from the Germans, and 200 metres from the French line. My trench was higher on the German side and lower on the French, so that they caught sight of me on the Sunday. About four o'clock, a sergeant came. 'What are you doing there?' he said to me.

"'I'm waiting for death,'" I answered.

"That was all I was thinking about. I hadn't been able to do any dressing, nor anything; and

I had bled so much that the trench was full of blood. The sergeant went back and sent two of the Engineers to fetch me about eight o'clock in the evening. Then they sent a message to the infirmary at Fontenoy, and I was taken there on a stretcher. I spent two days in the hospital, and then the train brought me to Aubervilliers."

6th November.

Deaths in the night; dying this morning, and among them, supremely saddening, a refusal of the Sacraments. God alone knows; God alone is judge, and I leave it in His hands; but it is hard all the same. Happily it is an exception, and a very rare exception.

I would rather let my memory dwell on the new gangrenous patient brought in yesterday. Arriving in the morning in a state of frightful emaciation, in the afternoon he became swollen up with gas from his feet to his neck, and soon up to his cheeks and even his eyes.

In spite of what is drawn off by tubes into a receptacle half full of water, the swelling increases and death is near. Already unconscious, he receives absolution and Extreme Unction. But here he is once more conscious, growing calm and smiling at the priest. He accepts my suggestions with docility, and joyfully receives anew the Divine forgiveness. Then he falls back into a sleep we all think

must be his last. But, this morning, I find him better; while his soul is still bright with the grace received, his poor body, the swelling gone, resumes a human shape.

What a happiness it would be for him and for me if, the ill lessening, I might soon bring him the visit, the Communion, of Our Lord, and if he made a complete recovery! Don't you see how impossible it is not to love them?

You ought to have seen the five Zouaves who came in this morning!

Two of them have legs, and one an arm, broken; the fourth had a bullet through his lung; the fifth a shoulder shattered by an explosive bullet, leaving a hole as big as a fist.

It is three days since they were wounded. They were hardly out of the car, and were still lying on stretchers in our hall, before each was trying to outrival the other in the spirit and gaiety with which the story was told of the fine fight where "we got this"; the retaking of the Farm at Metz, on Monday the 2nd, on the stroke of midnight.

They still laugh over the fright they gave the Boches. "As soon as they catch sight of the Zouaves, they throw away their rifles, calling out: 'Kamarades.' I had the pleasure of spitting one. . . . Three of us took thirty of them. For one that surrenders there are ten that follow suit."

When I went to see them again this afternoon,

I found one in a room where he runs no risk of losing his spirits. Three Englishmen were singing merrily to the applause of a Tunisian and four Frenchmen. One of these and an Englishman were occupied in knitting while they laughed; the nurse had taught them. It is a good amusement, which I prefer to cards, draughts, puzzles or patience. It is not taken to enough yet; up to now there are not more than twenty who go in for it, almost all English. Quite contrary to the idea the French had of them before seeing them close, the English are remarkable for their animation.

Perhaps because of the ills we endure nearer at hand, we can hardly—as is natural—go further than resignation and deliberate courage; but they go as far as gaiety.

Who is this young officer, laughing as he walks about, a borrowed képi unblushingly stuck over one ear? An English lieutenant. Who are those soldiers who are jumping along on their crutches or running on their wooden leg in the corridor? English again.

And those who are singing with much gesticulation, laughing aloud and trying to make the others laugh? Always English, unless by chance they be Tunisians or Negroes. Assuredly not Frenchmen.

La Bruyère said mournfully that one must laugh before being happy, on pain of dying without having laughed. We shall once again know happiness and

once again we shall laugh; now it is no longer possible.

More serious than we are in practical matters, the English are perhaps less so in their inner depths. There is something in them of the ingenuous child, and, as some one has said—assuredly not to belittle them—of the "splendid savage." [1] Above all, their minds, no less than their characters, are possessed by an inexhaustible optimism.

They always believe they will succeed; they believe it so firmly that they do everything needed for that end, and, in fact, succeed.

They will give in this War another proof of it.

When I ask them how they are, they must be actually dying if they don't answer, "Getting on nicely," or even, "getting on splendidly."

This is a dialogue of yesterday, with a man who had had a limb amputated.

"How are you this morning?"

"I'm getting on splendidly."

"Have you any news from home?"

"A letter from my mother."

"Does she know your leg has been cut off?"

"Yes; she thanks God, like me, that badly wounded as I am, my life was saved."

7th November.

My Breton of the other evening, who was going

[1] Henri de Tourville, in his preface to *La question ouvrière en Angleterre*, by Paul de Rousiers (Librairie Firmin Didot).

on well the last two days, is on the point of death. I had wondered if having for a moment believed himself restored to health, would make resignation more difficult for him. Thanks be to God, it is not so.

I reminded him of the beautiful state into which grace had put his soul.

"I have not changed," he answered simply.

And his twice-accepted sacrifice will make for him a twofold more glorious entrance into Heaven.

Providence has acted like a mother in increasing, in proportion to his merit, his portion of eternal happiness.

Life on earth has no other end but that; nothing in it counts but what helps on in us the growth of grace, a larger participation in the Divine Life. Why should we cling to the rest, which will soon fail us? Why seek riches, honours, pleasures, which not only do not last, but may lead us away from the real good? Uncertainty of existence, nothingness of all that is not God, everything shows it to me, everything proclaims it to me since the outbreak of this War, and especially here. Every day the lesson obtrudes itself upon me with greater might, as around me the sufferings, the agonies, the cruel farewells accumulate.

Voices of wounds, voices of death and voices of mourning, I believed I had understood you. Not well enough yet; yesterday, it was closer by that I heard you. . . .

XII

8th November.

I AM going to report the story of his adventures the good adjutant-curate told me yesterday.

His history, simple enough in itself, will seem all the more widely representative, and reported whole, though abridged, will give, I think, a pretty correct idea of what up to now the War has meant to the majority of our soldiers. In virtue of this, no doubt it will interest those who have any belonging to them at the Front; and which of us but has there some very dear to us? As to its accuracy, that is absolute. Doubtless I had something to do with the wording of the subject; but, drawn entirely from the story and the notes of our adjutant, it has been moreover submitted to him in the form in which it is now to be read.

"Starting from M—— (a central town) on the 13th August at three o'clock in the morning, we arrived at Vesoul on the evening of the 14th. On the 17th, after a long march, we began to hear the cannon, and we halted a kilometre from the frontier.

"Next morning we passed over it at half-past four, not without emotion; we noticed on the ground,

newly torn up, the posts, the milestones, the huts of the German Custom-house—all the remains of the annexation.

"Going through the Alsatian villages did not at first give us the joy we had anticipated; the doors remained shut, and even the windows. From behind the curtains grave-faced women peered at us in silence; they had seen the first French troops beat a retreat, which had caused a certain sense of disillusionment and a fear of having again to expiate a too warm welcome. Moreover the attitude varied according to the village, and a few old men, here and there, loudly expressed their satisfaction, even going so far as to sport a military medal.

"At two o'clock, on the 19th, we halted in the village of Guebwiller, twelve kilometres from Mulhouse, which our people were preparing to re-take. All day the cannon roared. In the middle of the night, we started in the direction of Mulhouse, then in that of the Rhine. At Ilfurth we received an enthusiastic welcome. There had been fighting there the day before; in a field of oats above the town, we discovered thirty dead, victims of this fight; two Germans, all the rest Alpine Chasseurs. One of these held in his hand the photograph of his wife upon which he had written: 'I was wounded two hours ago, on the battle-field. No one has come.'

"Our men seemed much impressed by it; up to

now they had not known what war was like. We proceeded to bury the corpses; the captain made a patriotic speech, and another priest, who is a lieutenant, and I, said the *De Profundis*.

"The next few days there was much coming and going. I have fancied, since, that General Pau wished to make us out as more numerous than we were, and so to lessen the effect of the recall of troops to the North. On the 26th and 27th, we went to Lepuy-Giromagny, near Belfort, perhaps to protect the start of the Seventh Corps, of which we formed the Reserve; and, on the 28th, we started ourselves. On the journey, especially in Seine-et-Marne and on the Grande-Ceinture, we received the warmest of welcomes."

Here I interrupted the narrator in order to tell him that the people, agitated by the thought of the German approach, saw in General Pau's troops relief and deliverance. I asked him if they had passed through Fontainebleau, and he said they had, which proves the correctness of the information received by M. N—— on the 30th August.

"We knew nothing of the situation," my new friend went on; "and great was our surprise at hearing, at Creil, that Uhlans had been seen thirty kilometres away.

"On Sunday the 30th, about one o'clock in the morning, we went down into Gasnes in Oise, and in the evening we went to Bacuël to take up the

out-posts. We met Alpine Chasseurs, infantry of the Line and some of the Moorish contingent. These troops had endeavoured yesterday to stop the advance of the enemy. Now they were retreating, and in a medley that looked very much like disorder.

"This hardly cheering impression was increased the next day at the sight of the exodus of peasants that followed the Army, telling of the arrival of the Germans at their homes; and fleeing without even taking their cattle with them. Grievous and mysterious news, rumours of treachery, added still more to the general discomfort.

"During the four following days we took part in the great retreat, and little by little in the discouragement it brought with it. We fell back in the direction of Beauvais, and then towards Paris, in stages of twenty-five miles under a broiling sun. On Friday and Saturday, the 4th and 5th September, we were still falling back, but now with a turn to the South-East, and with the feeling that this time it was a case of resisting. The spirits of the troops, which had deteriorated, rose again, and the men began to believe us when we told them that their fancies about treachery were folly, and that those in command well knew where they were leading them to. To understand their discontent, their weariness and privations must also be taken into account. Every day there were twenty-five-mile marches; and the country we went through, devas-

tated by former troops, did not even provide us with water to drink.

"On Sunday, the 6th September, we heard the sound of guns and firing. It was the cordial we needed. We marched on in the proper direction, and that night we slept on an open plain, near a village that the French shells were setting on fire because it was full of Germans. Afterward I learnt that its name was Puisieux. If only the enemy had known we were there!

"It must be supposed that in the morning they became aware of our presence, for we were awakened by a fine row and shells began to fall upon us; the first, indeed, sent some shrapnel on to the back of my great-coat without hurting me. We advanced unprotected, under the fire of the German artillery, for about twelve hundred metres, stooping at the whistle of a shell and making a carapace of our haversacks, which were often peppered but not pierced, and, thanks to them, we had scarcely one wounded. In the afternoon we paused to take breath in a deep ditch, north of Puisieux; quite calm, some smoking, others asleep, while the shells passed over our heads. That night we went through the still burning village and farther on we reached the out-posts.

"On Tuesday morning, at four o'clock, we resumed our march towards the East, under shell-fire like yesterday's, and soon under the rifles of the

infantry. Nothing could stop us. We knew of General Joffre's order of the day, saying that on this day's doings depended the defeat of the enemy, and that we must die rather than fall back. At half-past five the lieutenant of my section, a priest, too, was struck in the shoulder by a bullet; at six o'clock the lieutenant-colonel, and at half-past six the captain, fell in their turn.

"We took up our position in a farm, called Poligny, while we were waiting for our artillery to prepare the ground, and we dug a small trench to put the wounded in. My company took shelter in a shed, which, however, was not spared by the shells.

"Beside us were trained two machine-guns that battered, that mowed down whole rows of Germans; a sergeant, bare-headed, perched on the top of the heap of faggots, among the projectiles, impassively directed the fire. Some of our men tried to gain a little wood to our left. A rain of shells that we met with our heads, covered by our haversacks, decimated us all the same. My major, while he was speaking, was struck dead by a splinter.

"About five o'clock there was a short lull, which we employed in clearing off the wounded from the rear to Puisieux. I, with four or five men, was ordered to take the body of the major, M. P——, whose family I know, there.

"The next day, as we were digging his grave, we were obliged to leave off work, owing to persistent

shelling. About four o'clock, Lieutenant B—— arrived with a firing-party, to render the last honours.

"I recited the *De Profundis*, and we lowered the body, wrapped in a sheet, covered it with earth, and then with flowers, putting a cross, with name and date above the grave.

"I rejoined my company that night and found that they had held out at the farm, and had only one man wounded, in spite of the falling of six big shells.

"The next day, the 9th—a Wednesday—the rout of the Germans began. After half-past two the rifles ceased, but the shells continued to rain down, and their artillery fired until night to protect their retreat.

"On the Thursday, as the firing had ceased, we went to explore the enemy's trenches. They were abandoned, leaving a quantity of munitions and numbers of corpses. I remember a trench for six men in which not one was missing. Our little 75's had done two days' work there.

About one o'clock we began the pursuit, and kept it up the next day after sleeping at Betz. The inhabitants of the villages, who were already beginning to come back to them, told us that the Germans were flying in complete disorder, but yet never ceasing to believe that they were being led to Paris.

"At Villiers-Cotterets we were welcomed with cheers. At night we camped at Puisieux in Aisne, but the artillery did not stop. We saw a convoy of prisoners go by with bowed heads and in tears; it touched us rather, but, on the other hand, the population abused them.

"On the Saturday it was still the same pursuit, in miserable weather, and with scarcely a stop. We came upon the tail of the 7th Corps, of which we form the Reserve. After a short halt in the wind and rain, we started again at nine o'clock at night for the crossing of the Aisne.

"We crossed the river at four o'clock in the morning, over flying-bridges already swept by the German artillery, and camped at Port Fontenoy. My company, hardly dry yet, were sent to reconnoitre the plateau to the north of the village. The enemy was intrenched three-quarters of a mile away; we advanced upon him, but were soon ordered to draw back, so as to leave the field free for our artillery. The ground once prepared, our whole regiment went in the direction of Vic-sur-Aisne. We formed in line on the plain of Confrécourt for an attack on the German trenches. From the middle of the afternoon until evening, we advanced under the fire of the artillery.

"At the fall of night we saw coming towards us a column in fours which hailed us with: '*Camarades Franco-Anglo.*' It was dark; we hesitated and

let them come on. Some of them even got near enough to shake hands. They were upon us when we noticed their spiked helmets; then they took out their rifles from beneath their cloaks and fired at us point-blank. The same thing was happening at our right and at our left; our men became confused and wavered; we fell back, but not without having many wounded, as far as the plateau where we had been drawn up in battle-array. There we spent the night in some confusion, while the Chasseurs were fortunately checking and even repulsing the enemy. We got even with him again at dawn the next day by regaining, under a hail of shells, all the ground we had lost, and we did not stop to dig our trenches until we were only six hundred metres from the Germans. We had picked up our yesterday's wounded.

"So from the middle of September we remained in the trenches. The first part of the time was very hard; the commissariat was at fault, and we were not sheltered from the rain; that has almost as large a place in my notes as the fighting itself. And yet it hardly ever ceased; attacks and counter-attacks, sometimes by day, more often by night, from time to time mitigated by a short stay in the more peaceful dug-outs at Confrécourt where the wounded were. But the quarters improved; if straw often failed, to make up there were blankets and tent-cloths. Moreover, it was

evident that little by little we were getting the better of it. When the enemy made no endeavour to advance upon our trenches, almost every night we made a jump, sometimes of a hundred metres nearer to theirs, and dug fresh ones which we connected with the others.

"That was the life I led until the 31st October, when I got my wound. The most remarkable day was the 20th September, when a furious counter-attack of the Germans gained for them at first a small success, and then, thanks to the *Alpins*, a notable repulse with a hundred and fifty prisoners and numbers of dead; more being found as we advanced.

"About every eight days we were relieved, and each regiment went in turn to rest in the villages beneath the plateau—Port-Fontenoy, Ambligny, Vic-sur-Aisne, Berry, or Saint-Christophe. There one was relatively quiet in spite of the shells that incessantly fell upon them. Our country-visit was spent at Port-Fontenoy, which was about two hundred metres below our trenches.

"I had been there—since you wish to hear the end of my campaign—I had been there since the 22nd October. On the 28th, the Chaplain came and many went to confession. On the 29th, I said Mass at his portable altar and he served me at it, in a farm where two battalions were able to join. He preached on All Saints and All Souls. I offered

the Holy Sacrifice for all the dead in our regiment; it was a Black Mass. There were a hundred Communions; and at the end we sang two or three verses of '*Je suis chrétien.*'

"Our return from the plateau to our trenches was fixed for seven o'clock in the evening; the moonlight, which made the journey far from safe, decided us to wait till midnight. But then there began a terrible bombardment of the village—as always at the time for the relief—and we again put it off. By a coincidence which shows the perfection of their spy-system, almost every one of our reliefs was marked by cannonades and volleys from the enemy.

"At half-past twelve we started in spite of it; we really had to let the regiment that had relieved us take their turn for rest. The night ended quietly enough.

"The next day, some men, under cover of small steel shields, dug passages in the direction of the German trenches, and at night, in the open and unprotected, we made an advance of fifty metres. For a few minutes we lay down; then, a section dug a fresh trench, while others went on with the passage to connect it with the trenches in the rear, and so make sure of re-victualling and communication.

"Towards dawn—it was now Saturday the 31st—as adjutant, I wanted to see how the work was going on. Some of the men, tired out, had not dug deep enough; I recalled them to their work. For

ten minutes all was quiet, then the firing began. My men went on with their work, concealing themselves as much as possible. It was then that, obliged to go in front and to cross a small space still undug (it was not more than a metre in length). I was at once hit by a Mauser bullet. It entered, as you can see, below my left eye, went through the nostril and the top of the palate, pierced my right cheek, and came out under the ear, breaking the lower jaw-bone without touching my teeth.

"At first I felt the effect of the bullet only at the place where it came out; but soon I fell, deluged with blood, and believing I was mortally wounded. Then I took courage and crawled back to the trench. There, a comrade put on a first dressing, and in spite of the flow of blood from my mouth and nose, I went on foot, leaning on the corporal, along over a mile of trench-branches as far as the dressing-station of our regiment which was installed in a dug-out.

"The surgeon cleaned the wound, dressed it afresh, and telephoned for a wheeled stretcher to take me to the field-hospital at Amblény on the other side of the Aisne.

"You see how well it all went off; moreover, the journey was enlivened by bullets and shells falling everywhere. At midday, I was at the hospital. I staid there three days, unable to take anything or to breathe comfortably. At last they

succeeded in making me swallow some milk, and then I was sent off, with sixty others, to Villers-Cotterets, where we took the train. At Aubervilliers, the clearing-station, I got out, and here I am. It was a narrow squeak, but there's no harm done; only a little disfigurement and having to keep to liquids. In a few weeks I shall be well again and I shall go back."

XIII

9th November.

THE violent Battle of Dixmude—in which friends of mine have lost one of the dearest members of their family, the brave naval captain, G. M. de S. M.—sent us yesterday, in the person of an Algerian sharpshooter, a former pupil of the Brothers at Blida, one of the first wounded who have gone back to the Front.[1] Wounded at Charleroi, he had recovered in the hospital at Lannion. Returning to his dépôt in Aix-en-Provence in the middle of September, he went back to the Front at the end of the same month. He does not despair of getting there again soon for the third time, which perhaps may not even be the last.

Nothing gives a more vivid idea of the length of the War than does its present, and probably, future, duration. Here we have been fighting for a hundred days, and the number of victims is already larger than that in any other war in the past. But it appears, judging by the military operations, that

[1] PS. of 25th January.—Such cases are no longer rare. In December, there even came back to us an officer who had been cured in our hospital, and who had kept so pleasant a memory of it that, when he was again wounded, he asked to be sent back to it.

it is hardly begun. If peace, as we hope, must be preceded by the absolute submission of Germany, it must be remembered that her army still occupies Belgium, a tenth of France, and a great part of Russian Poland.

But everything does not depend on military operations, however preponderating they may be; there are also economical factors, events in the moral order and sudden interventions of Providence.

A stricter watch on the traffic of neutrals may hasten the exhaustion of Germany; having to fight under the leadership of Prussian Generals may one day rouse the pride of Austria; the Turks taking a hand in the game may put the rest of the Balkans on our side; Italy, by making her fear that the Eastern question will be settled without her; perhaps the United States by a massacre of Christians that would provoke their interference. Who knows?

And, in the balance of destiny, the accumulated weight of so many prayers, so many desires, so much suffering, does not go for nothing.

10th November.

At five o'clock to-day, a touching ceremony took place.

Accustomed as I am now to the beautiful examples of faith and courage, there was one among our patients whom I had particularly noticed for the

liveliness of his religious sentiments and his patience under terrible sufferings. It was the wounded man from Belfort whose coming I noted a few days ago.

That he had behaved perfectly on the field of battle I felt no doubt, but I did not know that it was to such a degree as to distinguish him among so many other heroes. He has won the military medal, and a lieutenant of sharpshooters, deputed by the Minister of War has just been to bring it to him.

A sergeant-major in the 5th Regiment of Field Artillery, Louis Schoeny (I may give his name, for we have no hope of his living, and this lamentable fear made to-day's ceremony all the more touching), Louis Schoeny, at Braisne, received two serious wounds, one tearing away the side of his face, the other fracturing his skull. Yet, he had the superhuman strength of will to remain at his post, half blinded by blood, and to serve his gun till a splinter of shell struck him in the stomach and knocked him down by the carriage.

The medal was handed to him by another brave man, the lt.-colonel of the 53rd Battery, himself under treatment at our hospital for wounds in the foot and shoulder. As far as circumstances would allow, he kept to the usual ceremonial. There were no bugles to sound the calls, but there was the military salute ; and comrades looking on from their beds, and the officers came from neighbouring

wards with an arm in a sling or a foot on a crutch, made up a fine audience. All of them, as well as the male and female nurses, felt the tears come into their eyes when, after the prescribed words: "In the name of the President of the Republic, and in virtue of the power conferred upon us, we award you the military medal," the wounded man asked to be raised that he might kiss the glorious badge, and receive it with more respect.

As he pinned it among the bandages on the panting breast, the colonel's own hand shook a little.

11th November.

This morning there came, dressed in the Breton peasant costume, the wife and the brother of a Reservist who died yesterday; they had started as soon as they were warned of the serious nature of his wound, and had believed they would find him still living.

M. L. C.—— brought them to me at the door of the Chapel and left me the task of telling them everything. After he left them, saying in his kindly voice: "You know that he is very bad?" they turned to me and said simply:

"Is he dead?"

I tell them he had shown himself a brave and good Christian. Their looks still question me; I look down and open the door of the Chapel. After saluting the Blessed Sacrament with a genuflexion

which shows me their faith, the poor creatures sit down, overcome, without tears or lamentation or words. After a little while I give them details of his piety, his resignation, his fine acceptance of his sufferings, his last requests; then I propose that we should say a *Paternoster* and *Ave Maria* together, after which we remain on our knees for a few minutes in silent prayer. When we leave to go to the Office, where funeral arrangements are made, the wife grows a little unsteady and leans upon the arm of her brother-in-law. Neither he nor she, though their eyes are full of tears that do not fall, speak an unnecessary word, and I only now learn that there is a little girl of three left. All that they ask for is to see their dead again and take him away if possible.

Summoned to another patient, I quitted them with regret, more impressed by their dumb anguish than by all the lamentations, the cries and the tears which I have witnessed hitherto.

A little later, I hear that in the mortuary, at the sight of what was left of him, the poor wife, still silent, fell down in a faint.

The other Breton of whom I spoke before and who so greatly edified me, is still alive, and passing through baffling alternations, in which the only thing that does not change is his submission to the Will of God. His old mother, who is allowed to be at his bedside as much as possible, is not less admirable.

After a week of comparative quiet, we are once more put to the test. At the present moment, there are four in the mortuary and two others dying.

This is why I make scarcely any notes on outside events. It is not that I follow less anxiously the news of the War, but what I see most of in it is the number of dead and wounded. However, the situation seems good, especially as to what is hoped for, but not acknowledged, for fear, I think, of its being a deception. In private there is talk of very hopeful operations already begun on the East, with the Rhine for first objective, while the Russians have crossed the Oder to the South of Silesia. Please God it is true!

12th November.

In default of the future, it is the past, up to now almost as obscure, that is beginning to reveal itself, and some of it is no matter for rejoicing. Since the second week of September, things have been going better, but the month of August, in spite of our successes, ephemeral moreover, in Haute-Alsace, must have been terrible, and we must have made some bad blunders there. If the defeat at Mons is known to all the world, we don't yet know to what extent the driving-back went, and for my part, I find it hard to understand why our Army, in spite of the success at Guise, and especially at such strong-

holds as Namur and Maubeuge, found itself, one fine day, falling back from Dinant to Vitry-le-François. This will have to be experienced later on.

Later on, too, we shall see more clearly into the cause of the retreat from Lorraine, and know to what extent it was really due to the faltering of certain troops. So far as one can rely on a quite fragmentary account, the recollections of one of my wounded, a sub-lieutenant in the Reserve, make me inclined to believe that the defeat was due also to our inexperience.

I report them for what they are worth, vouching only for their sincerity.

"I received my baptism of fire on the 20th August, on the banks of the Saverne Canal. The 25th Division of Infantry had started to take Sarrebourg; the town was fortified with those great howitzers on concrete platforms whose projectiles make holes big enough to bury two or three horses. But we knew nothing about it. After Epinal we had been advancing in high spirits, without coming upon any obstacle. The regiments that had gone on before us had seen a few Germans, but we had not seen one. It was different on the 20th August, and I shall not forget it. My battalion had to hold out all day long on Hill 330, in the thick of the shells. There was no attempt even to intrench or to hide from the aeroplanes; they'd be more cautious nowadays. Certain companies

were decimated several times. I can still see my captain giving two or three dying men the crucifix to kiss. About six o'clock, we were forced to beat a retreat, in spite of the help of our heavy artillery. When we had just crossed the Saverne Canal, the General of Division arrived with his Staff and ordered a half-turn. The whole division made a fresh attack, our cannon and machine-guns opened fire and four regiments dashed in. We went down one slope and up another under a hail of shells and bullets ; a few foot-soldiers fell back, but we went on. As soon as we got near enough to attack, we were ordered to fire in on them and the fire of the Germans diminished in intensity. To deceive us they had sounded our call for 'Cease firing' ; but we had been forewarned and were well able to distinguish the difference of sound. They stopped firing, and then we did the same. When there was nothing more to be heard, we climbed to the top of the hill and joined what was left of our men—just a hundred. The night had come, and we wondered where the enemy was. Cries were heard, but at first we could not make out whether they came from the French or the Germans. Then there was silence, and then the sound of a fife and a slow and solemn chant ; and in the dense darkness of the night, it was not wanting in beauty. Soon, sixty yards off, fires sprang up as if of themselves ; they must have prepared them so as to discover

and fire upon us. The major forbade us to go near them.

"We were not more than 470 metres from Sarrebourg, but it was too well defended to make it possible for us to enter, and, before midnight we went down to our starting-point on the banks of the canal, picking up all along the way the wounded belonging to our four regiments. The stretcher-bearers gave them first-aid ; I carried one off on my back. We were tired-out when we got to the canal ; after a short sleep, we resumed the retreat, which went on for four or five days. It was made in good order, but, sadly enough, through deserted villages, and our hearts were sore at re-crossing that frontier where still lay the posts torn up with such enthusiasm so short a time before.

"But, by the 24th, we were ourselves once more, and, once fixed on the line of Mortagne, we were able to keep the enemy at bay. We did not stir from there till 10th September, when we were ordered to Oise. Reservists relieved us and held their own too ; the Germans made no further advance ; indeed I believe that this time, in their turn, they must have fallen back, and for good. We have learnt our lesson."

13th November.

To-day I have been able to go back much farther into the past ; I have seen the notes that a corporal

who is a friend of mine, then in garrison in the East, wrote on the eve and the morning itself of the mobilization. Those were such weighty hours that the story of them must surely be of interest.

I abridge it a little, but add absolutely nothing to it.

"*Thursday*, 30*th July*.

"There is much talk of war. I am pessimistic and optimistic both. Moreover, I don't see how this peace-army can become a war-army. These men who say they are tired after a quarter-of-an-hour's drill, what will they say, what will they do, when ground must be defended or won foot by foot? However, I have faith in the issue of the diplomatic negotiations. I don't think we shall have war, and as is often the case, everything will get settled at last.

"*Five o'clock*. The dinner-bell. I go down to the dining-room, intending to go out afterwards. All sorts of different rumours are about. The corporals are summoned to the Office. The sergeant-major, generally so arrogant, is very quiet and gentle; he reads the mobilization orders to us and brings them up to date. I go out into the town to meet my friends C—— and B—— The last has received a packet containing excellent fruit—pears, apples, and bananas, which we dispose of at once, not for fear of the future, but because they are very ripe. What a good idea it was!

"I wrote to my mother and brother to tell them of

certain measures of precaution taken, but which, as I firmly believed, would have no consequences and were to insure against what was improbable—recall of men on leave, making out of bread-rations, mobilization-lists brought up to date.

"Coming back from the post, I bring in the evening papers, which, though not alarmist, still look upon the situation as very grave.

"Night has come; we are still arguing with B——. C—— is very optimistic and I hedge as usual. B—— is thinking of a postal-order that he has not been able to change or get changed; nobody will part with his silver, still less with his gold. I believe so little in complications that I don't think of changing an order for five francs I received yesterday. B—— takes us back to the Café de Paris and the discussion goes on.

"At nine o'clock we go back to quarters. As on any other night, we part with a hand-shake and a few jokes, and each goes back to his company. We are not to find ourselves together again. Before going to bed, I go to N——'s room to tell him what is in the papers, and then all sleep.

"*Friday*, 31*st July*.

"Midnight. The door of the room is violently thrown open, and, suddenly awakened, we hear the sergeant of the week calling out in a loud voice: 'Come! get up! Mobilization!'

"In the darkness the agitated men call to each

other. I foresee much confusion in the work which will have to be done; so before getting out of bed, I order the lamps to be lighted, and advise calmness for the first time, but not for the last. The various mobilization doings are began and feverishly carried on. The section sergeant, V—— roars in his youthful and uncertain voice; every moment he is calling me, ordering the gathering together of the Reservists' effects, going away, coming back, finding that nothing is getting on, retracting his orders, adding others. It gets on my nerves. We have plenty of time before us; looking to what has been already done, three hours are amply sufficient. I am proved right in the end, for we are ready before the time.

"Belongings are put into trunks and bags more or less carefully, and piled up at the end of the room, which, in the feeble light of the funny lamps, already looks upset. I climb up to the second story more than ten times to satisfy the sergeant. In the passages and on the staircases is a too restless, too hurried coming and going, running, calling out to each other, asking the same question a thousand times before the answer is taken in and can be made use of.

"From top to bottom, and from bottom to top of the building, they question, they call out, they jostle each other unconsciously in the half-light, and all this has a far from cheering aspect.

"I pack my bag as usual, so firmly do I believe that everything will be back in its place in a few days. However, as for boots, I pack up my 'war-collection' keeping on my feet those I usually wear. No towel, no soap, nor handkerchief, nor spare laces.

"Some one at the door calls into the room already in uproar: 'Two men for the cartridge-squad!' Fresh amazement, renewed recriminations. At last the selected men go, while their comrades unmake the beds and fold up the blankets as usual on getting up, and again there is grinding of teeth at having to clean the room.

"Here are the cartridges coming back. Sergeant V—— calls up each man and distributes them, writing the names in a memorandum-book as fast as he can. In a severe voice and with promise of penalties, he enjoins that no packet is to be undone.

"Now we are all ready, and, as is always the case, we have to wait. Though I try to set my mind at rest, this mobilization has more effect upon me than the preceding drilling. The diplomatic difficulties are not unknown, the rumours of war, the preparations already made, and all this has been made more serious by the more or less false and extravagant reports certain people take pleasure in circulating.

"After having made sure that the men had got with them all that was indispensable, I closed my travelling-trunk and put my personal effects into

a towel, hoping to find them as usual after the mobilization.

"That done, I went down to the ground-floor passage, and, to kill time, shook hands with friends who happened to be there, or were on duty. Among a thousand improbable and extravagant things, I hear that the officers have received their outfit allowances, and that, according to yesterday's German newspapers, the French have already reached the pass of the Schlucht.

"It was nearly three o'clock now; the dawn was coming, and in the half-light, sections filed through the courtyard. The men's *képis* bore their blue covers, which made their appearance still more sombre. Though still not quite believing in the seriousness of the performance, in the depths of my heart I began to be stirred up.

"At the foot of the staircase that leads to the sleeping-rooms, a voice called out: "Every one to come down!" I went up again to fetch my bag and my rifle, and came down, supposing our turn to start had arrived. There was a strict roll-call of the ranks; after which we piled arms and went back to the mess-room to eat the famous soup provided for on the mobilization time-table, and which more than once had made me smile."

14th November.

Things are progressing finely. This morning at

five o'clock, we received a soldier from Vic-sur-Aisne, who had been wounded yesterday morning about eight o'clock, less than a day between the time he was hit and his arrival at the final hospital, which means, unless it be some unusual injury, a certain cure. Three others who had fallen only the day before yesterday came at the same time. If it were only like this always!

Our patient from Vic is thirty-three; the Territorials are beginning to be in it; almost all our men are married, as one can see by their wedding-rings.

This man, like the others, shows splendid spirit; but, all the same, he says, it vexes him to have fought, fought for good and all, without ever seeing an enemy.

"Didn't you really see one?" I asked.

"Not a single one, I tell you, M. l'Aumonier, or rather I did see some, but they were prisoners, near Besançon, where I came from Lyons on the 6th August. I remained at the Dépôt till the 13th October. The civilians, too, saw just as much of them as I did. But since the 15th October, when I arrived at Vic-sur-Aisne and took my place in the trenches, I've never caught sight of one. It was as well not to raise your head to find out where they were. Early yesterday morning we were told to fix bayonets and to make an advance by creeping through a field of beetroot. We hadn't been there more than a couple of hours when I was struck in the hip by a

splinter of shell and by another one a little higher up. But still I saw no Germans. It's a funny kind of war."

15th November.

I think I have not said anything about our black patients ; yet we have had a large number, especially during the last few weeks. They were much used in September and October, foreseeing that they would have to be sent back when the cold weather came. They are truly the brave soldiers every one calls them, and ferocious enemies of the Germans. Every one of them has, as he calls it, "*zigouillé*" at least five or six, and the terror they inspire in the enemy is well justified. "Those Germans, they're no good."

But, apart from this hatred and their patience in suffering, which are common to them all, according to their country, race or tribe, they display very marked differences. The blacks who come from Northern Africa are almost as civilized as their Berber or Arab compatriots. From West Africa and the French Congo, on the contrary, along with some pretty intelligent there are others very primitive indeed.

One evening at the end of October we received a native of Guinea, from Konakri, who spoke French very decently, and even a little English. As he was wounded only in the head, he could be taken

to the bath-room, into which the doctor allowed me to go. A bath is *de rigueur* for all the new-comers whose wounds permit it, and you can fancy that, after spending weeks, months, without undressing, they fully appreciate its benefits. It is almost always even an occasion for showing their spirit of comradeship. James J——, the energetic and devoted bather-in-chief, tells me they all say: "If the other chaps could have this!"

Our African enjoys it in a touching fashion: "Oh, how good, how good!" he repeats, stretching himself out in the tepid water; and when he is told to sit up, and to hold out his arms to be soaped, he obeys with a smile. The white lather on his skin of bronze sets off his powerful muscles and the fine proportions of his great body. The doctor is in raptures. As no one else is waiting, there is no hurry. The handsome negro feels himself all the better for the operation. Full of go he shows us what he knows of English, then recounts his brave deeds in French: "Germans no good. '*Zigouillé*' two; '*zigouillé*' four"; and at the same time his long arms out of the water imitate half a dozen times with an expressive gesture, the spitting by the bayonet.

The least civilized of our negroes at the beginning of his stay (for since then . . .!) was certainly the Soudanese Mouça Sénoco, from the village of Chibougo in the Bambarra. His entrance was sensational. As the small bone of his leg was broken,

he could not be put into the large bath the evening of his arrival, and was, not without resistance, washed on his bed. But he found some means of compensation; for when he had been well scrubbed, he took a cup from the table, filled it from the basin, and, before they knew what he was about, swallowed the contents at a draught.

It had already been a job to undress him, but when they wanted to dress his wound he roared like a wild animal; he bit the nurse's hand badly, and must have taken us for Boches. We had all the trouble in the world to prevent him tearing off his bandages. Nothing could induce him to lie down in bed; he spent several days sitting up against the pillows and bolster, with hanging head, and his long arms reaching to his feet.

Taken the next morning to the operating-theatre for the draining of the wound, he looked curiously at the tube of ether and put it to his nose himself; it had only to be held there.

While he was asleep all went well, but the awakening was terrible. In spite of all that could be done, he tried to get up, and furious at being prevented, he seized the chair and threw it into the middle of the ward. They were obliged to remove the table or everything on it would have gone out of the window. When meal-time came, he ate very little and that with evident distrust, but he kept on obstinately calling for "Champagne! Tea!"

the only words he knew except three or four coarse expressions which the Colonials might well keep to themselves. At any opposition he flew into furious rages.

With a view to taming him, they brought another Soudanese to see him. He wanted to bite him. Thinking that perhaps this might be a member of a hostile tribe, a second experiment was tried, and he was removed into a ward where there was a model negro, the good, sedate Maciga, from Boubou Keita, in the neighbourhood of Bafoulabé.

This proved the beginning of salvation for our young savage. Maciga, who was moreover a corporal, succeeded in quelling him, made him by degrees listen to reason, and aided by the gentle firmness of the nurses, brought him round to actual docility.

From that time progress has been rapid, and nowadays there is no nicer patient than Mouça. So far from wanting to bite you when you come near him, he is the first to say *bonjour* to you and to ask how you are. He lies in his bed in European fashion, and even makes a charming picture with his peaceful black face between the white sheets and the red *chechia*.

Since he began to improve, he whistles the bugle calls between his teeth, eats sweetmeats, looks at pictures and palavers with Maciga.

If his hurt prevents him from going out, Mouça none the less receives visits. I don't speak

of the interest taken in him by every one who enters the ward to fulfil some duty or to see any other of the patients; no; Mouça receives visits from personal friends, compatriots.

To be quite truthful, it must be put in the singular! Mouça is visited by Baba Konaté, an educated and well-bred negro, with the air of a real gentleman, who is at present a servant in the Protestant Missions in the Boulevard Arago.

Baba Konaté always arrives here armed with tobacco, apples, lozenges and boiled chestnuts, which make him still dearer to our negro patients. A native of Grand-Bassam, he can make them all understand him by speaking Bambarra, which is the most widely spread tongue in French West Africa, except Yolaese. He told me so himself, for I, too, am in Baba Konaté's good graces, thanks to a hospital-attendant who discovered it and introduced me to him. And through Baba Konaté, I have made friends with Mouça Sénoco, Maciga Kata, without mentioning Akodou Toudé, Ona Couami, Kodé Kamara. . . . But I don't like to boast.

XIV

16th November.

YESTERDAY evening we were told to expect a large contingent of English ; four hundred were to arrive at the Gare du Nord, and we were to have forty. All our cars went there and we mobilized several others.

In fact, we received only eight of the wounded, all hit the day before near Dixmude, and all full of spirit. Like ourselves, moreover, our Allies in defending the Yser, that is to say the road to Calais, display fanatical courage. It costs us all day after day and for weeks a number of killed and wounded that hitherto would have sufficed to give lustre to a battle ; but English, Belgian, French, far from being disheartened, only rejoice that the Germans were losing still more and don't get through. And this courage is not only excitement, it remains after the battle. This morning, an Irishman of this new set asked to go to Confession and I promised him Communion to-morrow. When I saw him again in the afternoon : "Father, I've lost my leg," he said in a quite normal voice.

In fact it had had to be amputated without delay.

A little upset in spite of myself, I looked at him affectionately and spoke a few kind words.

He answered at once: "I accept the will of God."

And his face betrayed no emotion, was only a little paler from the loss of blood.

18th *November.*

Louis Schoeny, the artilleryman who received the medal just a week ago, is now in Heaven, in the possession of higher and more lasting rewards. He passed away last night, facing the lingering hospital death as he had faced the fire of the enemy. He was to have received Communion this morning; seeing him worse last night I proposed the Sacrament for the Sick, and he answered simply: "I am quite willing."

I had advised his wife, who came some days ago, not to go back, although she was summoned to a sick father. Before this implicit avowal of our fears, and still more this morning when she heard of their fulfilment, she showed herself the worthy mate of a hero and a true Christian.

In this house where tragedy itself becomes the normal state, and ceases to excite remark, all were specially interested in Schoeny, and his death is a grief to all. It is such facts as this which little by little, in spite of our great numbers, create a sort of common sentiment and greater intimacy.

Some say, thinking of what Schoeny suffered after he came, "It would have been better for him, since it was to be, to die on the field of battle."

I try to answer that the eternal increase of his worth, his moral merit by enduring so well such long-drawn tortures, was no loss of time for an immortal soul.

My colleagues would take the same view of it as I do if they filled my office; they might have profited more greatly by it.

I live in an atmosphere of heroism and faith. What noble examples, and so simply given! There is my patient from Finistère, perpetually tossed about between life and death, always calm and submissive to the will of God whatever it be; and his mother, who comes every morning, shares in this fine submission.

There is the young wife, crushed but calm, of a soldier twenty-six years old, who died the day before yesterday. A fire of hope shone through her tears while she listened to my account of his Christian ending.

There is, amongst those who live, one blind man now told of his fate and by degrees resigning himself to it, helped to submit by an ingenuously sublime consort.

But what am I saying? Heroism shines forth everywhere; never can humanity have displayed so much. Wives, mothers, sweethearts, who con-

sent to know that those they love are on the field of battle, and who, if need were, would send them there; men and officers who ungrudgingly hazard their lives; those men who, under fire, pick up the wounded, and those women who tend them in hospitals; those who have lost everything and are resigned and those who despoil themselves to help them. And above these thousands of examples, as if to concentrate them in one unique deed, before which history will bend the knee—Belgium! That is to say an entire nation sacrificing everything to its dignity, its duty, its honour, and when it might by a word escape disaster, accepting rather than be false to itself, ruin, hunger, fire, murder; hunted from home with its King, with its army, holding now but a particle of its territory, and on that particle continuing to resist to its last man; at the point of death to all appearance, yet serene, as certain of final victory as of its duty; its hand always on its sword, and its eyes raised to Heaven to see the coming of God's justice.

Before the sublime lesson of such a spectacle there are moments when one believes one understands why the War was permitted, the world perchance having never suffered such ills, but also having never risen to such a height of moral greatness.

When, the day before yesterday, I saw our whole country celebrating with all its heart the Feast-day of the King of the Belgians, and every voice from

the newspaper to the Christian pulpit praising Albert I with his people, I rejoiced over the good done by the sight and the love of such beautiful examples, and I did not fear to compare, to match this benefit in another kind with the saving delay which we owe to the unforgettable resistance at Liége. It was well that on Sunday at Notre Dame de Paris, in presence of our Cardinal and of King Albert's sister, before an immense crowd that applauded in spite of the sacred character of the place, an eloquent preacher concluded his sermon thus :

" To the whole Belgian race, honour and blessing for ever and ever ! "

And I will confess to have felt it a real honour when I came across Mme. la Duchesse de Vendôme yesterday when she was going through our wards, and I welcomed her kind words as if they had come from the admirable people she so worthily represents.

Visits, even of Princes, take place here without ceremony, and it was only by chance that I heard of those of Queen Amélie and of the Prince of Monaco, as later on of the Princess Marie and Prince George of Greece. I should like to have seen the first, in whom all majesties—talents and misfortunes, virtue and rank—are united ; and I should have been glad to offer once more my personal homage to the second, whom no one

can know without becoming attached to him for the energy with which he pursues all that makes for the progress of men's minds, and for his devotion to France. He did her valuable services in times of peace; he served her by fighting under her flag in the war of 1870, so giving moreover an example that his son and heir has not failed to follow to-day. But if I had had to choose among these meetings I should have plumped for that which a quite providential chance procured for me; I should have plumped, in the matter of august personages, for her who was born Princess of Belgium.

20th November.

We have at present not less than three hundred and fifty wounded, and every day more fresh ones come in than convalescents go out. Our five hundred beds will soon be all full; and the active generosity of the Americans does not stop here; they will establish branches, and it is said that large contributions have been put at the disposal of our committee to found a hospital in Belgium as soon as that is possible, and another in France as close to the Front as prudence will permit.[1]

[1] PS. of 25th January.—A million francs has been sent to the committee by Mrs. Harry P. Whitney, and has been used for the establishment of an affiliated hospital in the College at Juilly in Seine-et-Marne. There are already two hundred beds there, and it can provide four hundred. New proposals are being made to the com-

In proportion to the prolongation and extending of the War, I feel less need for noting down the tidings of it. I know now that these notes will soon appear; a friendly publisher has just decided their fate, so why should I speak of what all the world knows, and which is, moreover, much too colossal to be reflected in my small mirror?

For me, as doubtless for us all, the War is the unbelievable roll of battles being fought in Flanders, in Champagne, in Lorraine, in Alsace, in East Prussia, in Poland, in Galicia, in Serbia, in Turkey in Europe and Turkey in Asia; on the shores of the North Sea, of the Mediterranean, of the Black Sea, and on the expanse of different Oceans; a baffling and maddening spectacle, in the face of which, at certain moments, one's feelings grow numb, unable to rise to the pitch of emotion it needs.

But the War, as seen by my eyes, is above all a mixture, or rather an alternation of horrors and splendours; of frightful evil and surpassing good; it is the monstrosity of suffering, wounds, mutilations and agonies; it is the sublimity of voluntary self-sacrifice, patriotic devotion, duties accepted and full of hope.

Let us pause a moment, for instance, beside this man of thirty,[1] with his pale, emaciated cheeks,

mittee, who have them under consideration, for the founding of other affiliated hospitals.

[1] PS.—The soldier from Mouzon of whom mention

his blue eyes, his long russet beard, a real Christlike face ; don't let us be deceived by the smiling calm of his expression ; for six weeks, Charles Marée has endured an almost constant martyrdom ; his pelvis fractured with all the consequences one can guess, weakened by hæmorrhage, his back worn out, able only to move his head and his arms. Several times we thought we had lost him, and we are still far from certain. Moreover, if he lives, it will only mean longer suffering for him. Yesterday, while his bed was being made, and talc sprinkled over it to relieve the sores, two men-nurses and four women held him above it in their arms, and it looked to me like a Descent from the Cross. He is one of our most fervent Christians. I take him Communion twice a week, and never does he complain of his sufferings. He is also one of our bravest soldiers ; he won the Military Medal, and when I asked him under what circumstances, this is what he told me confidentially, his hand in mine, for we are great friends :

"It was given to me on the 8th October. I had had to carry out a rather difficult mission. It was at Mazingarbe, near Vermelles, between Béthune and Lens, about nine o'clock at night.

is made under the date of the 3rd November. I believed him then to be forty, judging by the signs he showed of his hard campaign and his wounds. We shall have to tell of his death on December 29.

Two armoured cars with machine-guns had been signalled as approaching our lines. I was ordered to go to meet them with a twenty-five to thirty horse-power Peugeot; I was automobilist to the 30th Dragoons, so I started on the short road to Vermelles, where it was said the two enemy cars were. After about twenty minutes, I turned out the lamp and waited. There was a quarter of an hour of profound silence, and then I heard the sound of the first machine-gun. With a twist of the wheel I turned my car cross-ways, and that of the enemy came right into us. As soon as the blow was given, I sat up on my seat and killed the chauffeur and the mechanician with my revolver. But then the second machine-gun came up almost at once; the two men on it saw what had happened. While one of them stopped the engine, the other, from beneath his seat, fired his revolver at me; the bullet struck me between the thighs, and then they turned about. Very fortunately, my companion had not been hit, and he was able to take me back to Vermelles where there was a dressing-station. That same evening I was given the Military Medal, for which I had already been recommended three times."

24th November.

Decorations are not rare in our refuge for the brave; it would be monotonous if I mentioned them

all. I have already spoken of an English soldier who wears the Military Medal, and we have an Arab sergeant, with a serious, refined face, who won his at the farm at Soupir by an act of devotion of which this is the official specification:

"Aïtammer Achour Benamor, sergeant in the 3rd Regiment of native skirmishers. In the fight of the 6th November, his lieutenant[1] having been mortally wounded, in a zone swept by the enemy's shrapnel, did twice cross this zone, and succeeded in bringing back the body of his officer, though himself seriously wounded in the knee."

The wound, due to an explosive bullet, is one of the worst that have been tended here. Achour Benamor will take long to recover.

Of the noble figure of an African and him who hit him with a bullet forbidden by the laws of war, which is the best exponent of real "Culture"?

One of our officers, Lieutenant André B—— has

[1] Our hero's lieutenant deserved the devotion he inspired. This gallant officer had left Saint-Cyr only three years earlier, and had already been called out twice to Morocco, on the 14th August, 1913, and the 20th August, 1914. Mortally wounded in the groin in the wood of Bovette, near Soupir, on the 6th November, he had walked on fifteen metres, to fall ten metres from the German trenches. This is how *l'Officiel* speaks of him:—

"Order of the 27th November, 1914: Lhote, Lieutenant of the 3rd Regiment Skirmishers, fell gloriously in the course of an attack, calling out to his men: '*Don't think about me; go on!*'"

been made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, for the following reason: "Commanding the leading company of an attacking column, on the 27th October, he led his men with the greatest courage under a murderous fire. Falling wounded in two places, he continued to urge on his men with vehement words and gestures."

His captain, when sending him the news, added his affectionate congratulations, and this kindly wish: "I think it will be a balm for your grievous wound."

The cross has been sent, with the usual formula, through another of the wounded, a major, himself decorated in 1870, and again for Tonkin and Tunis.

"So many others deserved it better!" whispered the young lieutenant, scarlet with emotion.

The climax of his confusion was reached when the major, having kissed him, added that: "The accolade of these ladies would ratify his."

After a moment of pretty embarassment, the wife of another officer, a patient in the same ward, took the initiative, and the ceremony was performed with equal grace and dignity. The nurses were just of an age to have their eldest sons in the Army. They had brought a splendid bouquet and the other patients tendered their own crosses.

For fear this one should not come in time, the Comte de la S——, a hospital assistant and a retired major here, got his own, which he won in Africa, in readiness.

In the same ward as our new Chevalier and very intimate with him, there is a young lieutenant of the Reserves whom I was delighted to welcome here —L. de T——, one of the best writers about American matters; and who, but for the War, would be actually at San Francisco (the poor Exhibition !).

Having made a study of similar subjects, we had sometimes written to each other, and here is a rare chance of making acquaintance. I rejoice in it without scruple, for his wound, painful as it is will not prevent his using sword or pen again. Besides, the officers don't like you to pity them. There are among the men some, bearded fathers of families, that one can pet like children; but if you speak to an officer of his wounds, he only wants to change the subject. If, as an exception, he may lose his spirits and smiles, it is certainly never at the cruel time of the dressings. Under moderate pain he is always calm; when it is so piercing that he can't hold his tongue, he makes jokes.

It is truly a matter for pride to shake hands with such men; during the three months I have associated with them, I have seen none that was not admirable; officers on active service; officers in the Reserves; professors, doctors, men of business, tradesmen or agriculturists, the élite of every profession; and the dear young fellows who had not finished their military education, and the elders who for various

reasons had resigned, but who went back to serve at the call to arms. Unlike the private, who, as a rule, is rather resigned to return to the Front than eager to do so, these wait impatiently for the time when they can get back to their Command, and literally, time hangs heavy on them, anxiety possesses them, because of their companies or battalions, what one might truly call their military family. It is not that they have a brutal love for fighting for its own sake; but they are fully aware of the cause they are serving, and they burn with enthusiasm for it. They know they are not fighting only for the safeguarding of legitimate material interests, but for the independence of their own country and of the whole of Europe; to preserve for their sons and the whole human race a higher kind of life; to crush the domination of a band of assassins, incendiaries, and pillagers, who think their crimes excusable because they commit them remorselessly, and who, even more, feel a horrible pride in that no one before them has ever committed such crimes, nor with such science. Reims, Louvain, Senlis, Ypres, Belgium—so many names that minister to their shameless boast, but amongst our men, and above all with our officers, serve to keep up gloriously the clear conscience, the sacred fire of an avenging and retributive cause.

XV

26th November.

To-day, I was able to go in one of our ambulance cars to the clearing-station at Aubervilliers-la-Courneuve, whence come to us the greater number of our wounded.

We arrived at two o'clock. No one knows when an ambulance-train may come, or even if one will appear before the middle of the night. I resign myself to wait, if needs be, till ten o'clock at night.

At first I see nothing but an immense goods-station, to all appearance empty and almost dormant; a few trains at rest; closed huts; soldiers in all sort of uniforms, or on duty before a barrier that no one dreams of opening.

What's to be done for a whole half-day in this cold, dull desert? The two American chauffeurs (or I rather think one is a chauffeur and the other a stretcher-bearer), have pointed out to me a second-class compartment, which is appropriated for the use of the Staff of our hospital, as a refuge, and what is more important, have promised not to start back without me. Moreover, they have introduced

me to the station-master turned soldier, or rather the soldier turned station-master, who lauded our hospital, and made me free of everything: "You are at home here."

A charming welcome, no doubt, but what am I to do with it?

If I could find the hospital-attendant who came last week from the station to pay us a visit, I should be saved; only I don't even know his name. I know that he is a priest, but priest-soldier is no longer a sufficient description, and here, it seems, under their uniforms, I have three or four colleagues. At last, I manage it; from platform to platform, from ward to ward, from sentry to Red-Cross lady, from nun to soldier, at last I reach my hoped-for guide.

We walk about everywhere together, and I wonder at the welcome given him by all. Despite the great-coat and the red trousers, despite his fierce moustache and his foraging-cap, civilians and soldiers give him his *Monsieur l'Abbé* more sympathetically, I conjecture, than did his parishioners in Indre-et-Loire. He is the real Chaplain of the station, and when the trainful of wounded arrives, his two offices of priest and hospital-assistant blend, or rather supplement each other to perfection.

While we are strolling about the courtyard a soldier approaches and gives him a small phial. "The holy oils for Extreme Unction," he explains.

"When I go out, I always give them in charge to another priest."

Soon he will have to leave me, for Benediction and a short sermon in the church at Courneuve in place of the absent Curé. The buildings he shows me before going are very sketchy but of great use. Two canteens are occupied with the re-victualling of the trains, distributing nourishment to the wounded, and sometimes garments of which they are in need. One, the oldest, is managed by the *Société de Secours aux Blessés* with the assistance of the Sisters of Saint-Vincent de Paul; the other, called the Press Canteen, is under the management of Mme. Berthoulat. A Red Cross ambulance, worked by ladies of high position, is also kept in readiness to give all needed help and attention.

But all these—without at all depreciating their value—are but auxiliary and supplementary to the military hospital properly so-called.

It entirely fills the immense goods-shed. All the wounded and all the sick in each ambulance-train are taken there; some to be evacuated to the hospitals in Paris or the suburbs; others to await the making up of a fresh train, which, having passed the registry station at Bourget, will travel to the stationary hospitals distributed about the provinces.

Those whom the surgeons decide to evacuate, start as soon as possible, in a couple of hours at most; it

is from these that our dear guests are recruited. For the last two days as many as two hundred have been sent to Paris and its suburbs; before that very few were sent there, and everywhere one heard the complaints of willing nurses who were consumed with longing in their empty hospitals.

While waiting, sometimes for hours, sometimes for a day or even two, for the train which is to carry them further, the others receive on the spot the attention their state calls for.

A hundred and fifty beds are kept for them—or rather, as they will not be undressed—a hundred and fifty shake-downs. The far end of this great dormitory is reserved for infectious cases; blankets and mattresses are baked in the stove.

At the other end, there is a little canteen, and a sort of bureau, with table and chairs round a small cast-iron stove. There, at times for rest, sit the nurses on duty. With the help of gangs of military hospital-orderlies, it is they who do the dressings under the direction of the surgeons. They are much pleased, they tell me, with the Boy-scouts of the Ninth District, who are always at their service when they send for them.

At their head is the wife of a manufacturer of Courneuve, Mme. G——. Not content with keeping the wives and children of her husband's employés during the War, she undertakes the expenses of the hospital. But her greatest feat has been the

organizing of it. Everything now goes on so well that there is no harm in recalling past history for which, moreover, no one seemed responsible. At the beginning, nothing could have been simpler;—there was nothing there. You looked into the carriages and got out the men who could wait no longer, or were dead.

On the 19th September, without warning to himself or any one else, the station-master witnessed the unloading of the enormous crowd of 3,700 wounded. He sent to fetch Mme. G——. She came in haste, bringing with her all the cotton or linen she had at hand, enough for the dressing of twenty or thirty. The shed, badly lighted, was still encumbered with parcels, trunks and barrels. The brave woman said to herself that all this must be altered. Her initiative, appreciated and seconded by competent authorities, brought forth the organization which, I hope, will work under my eyes presently.

"Presently," but I don't quite know when that will be. It was only four o'clock when my guide forsook me. With the idea of resting and taking notes, I climb into the compartment reserved for our hospital. Some of our men are already installed there. We keep cars always at this station to be ready for any occasion. I am pleased to see the one of my travelling companions who was so kind as to sit upon the step that I might have his seat.

Talk begins, and I soon perceive that, under a rather flippant manner, I have to do with perfect gentlemen. Our talk is naturally of the War, its causes, and its consequences; and here come out views on Cæsar, on Napoleon, on the social and economic contentions of the day, in which I am not a little surprised to come upon general views and exact knowledge that are both a proof of great stability of mind. With my companion, especially, a kindly giant six feet and a half high, it needed no investigation to discover that he was the possessor of a lively intelligence and fine culture. We talked of Boston, of his studies at Harvard, of my lectures at the Lowell Institute, of the pleasure it had given me to meet his master, William James; of Mr. Elliot, the former President of the University, and of Mr. Lowell, who is now its brilliant Head. We became quite friends, and on our return, his solicitude in protecting me from the cold went, against my will, so far as despoiling himself.

I had taken him for a bachelor, so young he looks, but he is the father of a family and in business. This double tie could not keep him back; War declared, he felt he must cross the Atlantic so as to take his part—it did not matter how—in the great things that were coming. And it is not the worst way he chose in helping towards the aid of the wounded. He willingly goes to fetch the railway convoys; but his soul rejoices much more

when his turn comes for transport between the field of battle and the hospitals near the Front. The danger adds a charm to that of the service done.

These last few days again, twenty-five such young men have come across the Channel to join our ambulances. It will be seen that with this addition we can make up eighty-three cars, of which fifteen are at Neuilly and sixty-eight at the Front.[1]

I like this American fashion of practising neutrality; it proves the sincerity of what they say over there: "We are so neutral, that it does not in the least matter to us to know which nation will beat Germany."

NEUILLY, 27*th November.*

Let us continue yesterday's notes. At six o'clock in the evening, in spite of the attractions of American society and recollections, I got out of my compartment to stroll about and stretch myself a little. The world is so small that, among the soldiers wandering about the courtyard, I found two friends, one an Abbé from Aurillac, an old pupil of mine, who was impatiently waiting to go to the Front to gather

[1] PS.—In the middle of January the numbers rose to 103. One party brings the wounded from different stations to our house, or even, when so wished, to other hospitals. More than half do duty at the Front, which is far from being the least useful service. How many lives would be saved if the immediate picking-up and transport of the victims of war could be assured!

up a crop of wounded. A train taking reinforcements there, from which friendly farewells reached us, still more quickened his desire. At seven there was the relief, and my *Auvergnat* had to leave me. Alone once more, I take refuge in the corner of the great shed, where the hospital ladies give me a seat by the stove and a cup of tea. Thanks to them I gain a certain amount of information.

Eight o'clock. My two companions want to go back if nothing happens and tell me that, failing their car, I must take that which goes back at midnight. Rather perplexed, I make inquiries and learn that an ambulance-train is due at half-past eight. After that, they don't hesitate about deferring the start.

At half-past eight, truly, here is the train coming in; and at the same moment, I have the great pleasure of meeting again my valuable guide, the priestly hospital assistant. He explains to me that it is a collecting-train, such as go past pretty regularly every day and that must not be taken for one of those that are made up near the Front after the engagement itself. Into these last, all the wounded who seem fit to be transported, are hastily carried almost without selection.

Our train, which comes from Soissons, contains about two hundred men; some bring six or even eight hundred. From the 19th September to the 10th November there have come into this station

seventy thousand. It is true that of this rather striking number, thirty thousand were only slightly crippled.

As soon as the train stops, the military orderlies (there are no others here) open the carriage-door, help the weakest to get out, and gently carry away those lying on stretchers. In a quarter-of-an-hour all are in the shed, standing, sitting, or lying while the nurses pass between the rows pouring out warm drinks and the surgeons make the selection and distribution.

The slightly lamed are directed to the Balcoq factory in Courneuve itself which has been fitted up to receive them, and they go there on foot. The wounded who don't need surgical aid, go to the hospital at Courneuve. The sick and not seriously hurt will wait here for the making-up of the train which, doubtless to-morrow, will carry them far and wide. Finally those who are most seriously wounded are allotted without delay, and, according to their hurts or their maladies, to the different hospitals in Paris and the suburbs.

We ask for two, who are given to us without any difficulty, but whom I have scarcely time to speak to.

While they are being carried to our car, the priest-orderly exclaims ; " I forgot to show you the carriage of the dead ! "

We rush to it, and, in spite of the feeble glimmer of a distant lamp, when it is opened, I catch sight

of the tricoloured stripes that are painted on it; they are ornament enough.

"Happily you see it empty," says my guide; "the dead don't stay there long. As soon as there are any, the Curé of Courneuve comes to have the bodies carried away and celebrates the service in his parochial Church. But, as his cemetery would not be large enough, I myself take them to the Aubervilliers Cemetery, and there recite the last prayers, wearing a black stole over my great coat."

As he says this, he brings me back to our car and I give him an affectionate farewell. With this devotion and this cheerful temper, secretly nourished by faith, but to all appearance become second nature, it is no wonder that our priests, chaplains, hospital-attendants, combatants, everywhere win the liking of their companions-in-arms and do them so much good.

I should like to dwell on this consoling thought, but soon it gives place, in spite of myself, to sadder pictures, and while, slowly, for the sake of our precious load, we wind along the dark suburb and through the badly-lighted town, I see again those two hundred men—silent and suffering—waiting patiently in the great station-shed for what will be decided on for them, prepared for everything, resigned beforehand, unheeding henceforth whether it be a little more or a little less pain.

I was especially struck with the sick, less familiar

to me than the wounded, weaker, too, paler, more doleful, more weary, as if quite passive, indifferent and unconcerned about living. Exhaustion is the great trouble in a war such as this; it is wonderful that its ravages have not been greater on our side. Thanks for that must be given to the zeal of our administration, which provides for everything, and to the paternal solicitude of commanding officers who are as far as possible considerate of the strength and health of their men; whose spirit also counts for something.

The two wounded we brought back yesterday were struck down at the height of their strength; as I saw them last night on our arrival, and in their beds this morning, they possess reserves of life that will help them to a quick recovery. That fine Moorish corporal with his coal-black beard and fiery eyes, seems in no wise troubled by the splinter of shell that has nevertheless entirely fractured his thigh-bone; for fear he should be bored, for it will be a long affair, he has been put beside a compatriot. That Paris workman, civil engineer and infantry corporal, shows in his look and voice (for good reason he cannot gesticulate) as high spirits as if he were coming back from a fête. A splinter of shrapnel went completely through his arm, while he was struck by another in the leg; but these little matters don't seem to count in his delight at finding himself once more in Paris and

near his family. He is only twenty-six. We receive very few of that age now; for the most part they are from thirty to forty.

What I must not omit to note, à propos of our Parisian, is that, wounded the day before yesterday in a trench seven kilometres from Soissons, he was already in bed in our hospital yesterday evening. And still better; this very evening I witnessed the arrival of another, wounded only this morning.

XVI

2nd December.

I WAS very much astonished when a man told me that they were beginning to light fires in the trenches.

"But the smoke?" I questioned.

"Oh! it's not very thick, and one takes precautions. A little straw and small wood, and then some big logs."

I forgot to ask him, but, evidently, the position of that trench must be very unusual, or pretty far from the enemy; in all the others I hear of they suffer from cold. They suffer outside the trenches, too, and still more; for the first time I have just seen a patient whose foot had been frost-bitten.

"How can it be helped?" he said; "when you're on duty, you must spend hours of the night without stirring; you can't even stamp with your feet; the smallest movement would draw the enemy's fire on you. I kept there like that with my feet in the snow. There's only one frost-bitten, but the other is just as painful; they're keeping it in wadding. As to the frozen one, the toes seem dead."

I wonder no one had the idea of getting some

sabots for our men, or goloshes big enough to let them put them on over their boots. Anyhow they ought to be given to those who have to spend the night without stirring.

3rd December.

I keep to my idea about the goloshes, and to-day submitted it to one of our officers, and even to a general who came to see his wounded son. It appears it is not so new a one as I believed, and that it has been talked about more than once in competent circles. Perhaps talking about it is not enough.

And here, this very afternoon, confirmatory evidence comes which is even stronger than I wished for.

Thirty English soldiers come to us from that fierce and endless battle-field over the region between Ypres and La Bassée. Some of them are sick and we have them taken to suitable hospitals. Among the others, all of whom we keep, three or four are wounded, but the greater number are suffering from frost-bitten feet. If modest sabots might spare these brave men unnecessary suffering and keep more fighters for us, don't let us despise sabots.

In a paper of to-day I see, with emotion, in the list of the winners of the Military Medal, this name, on these grounds: "Schoeny, sergeant-major in

the 5th Field Artillery. Showed quite extraordinary coolness in the night-attack of the 31st October; shockingly wounded in several parts of the body, showed unprecedented courage, in making no complaint, and said to the major of the company, who told him he should recommend him for the Military Medal: 'I have done nothing to deserve that.'"

We have spoken of this hero already (see *10th November*).

11th December.

This time I have succeeded, and my goloshes are to be put before the department for applications; oh! in a very small way at first; but who knows what example may do? The day before yesterday I was speaking about them to the Comtesse de C—— and two of her friends whom I was showing over the hospital. She was so touched that she has already written to me to ask me what she could do against the danger of frost-bite. I have begged her to put herself in communication with the Society for making warm clothes for the soldiers, the directors of which are great friends of mine.

One of these same directors, who also manages the *Revue Hebdomadaire*, sent me yesterday a very interesting visitor in the person of the Roumanian journalist, M. D——, who wished to see the hospital. The *Revue Hebdomadaire* makes a speciality of Roumanian questions, and the lectures it got up

at Bucharest won it valuable connexions out there, while at the same time they inspired a love for our country. I could quite trust M. D——. What brought him was not curiosity nor even a mere feeling of compassion for the wounded. He came to gain knowledge, to see how best to help at home the victims of the coming war. The questions he asked would have made me guess that, if he had not himself owned it as soon as we became confidential. I betray no secrets in putting it down in these notes ; it is probable that when they appear events will have begun. Moreover, the signs are plain enough in the language of statesmen, in armaments, in the more and more excitable manifestations of public feeling.

To the four millions of Roumanians under the yoke of Magyar insolence, the first ray of sunshine that shall melt the snow on the Carpathians will herald the approach, so long awaited, of the fraternal liberators ; . . . and at the same time, let us dare hope, at the same moment, Greece and Italy will arise.

From Athens and from Rome, as from Paris, from London, from Brussels and from Petrograd ; from the Parthenon and from the Capitol, as from the Kremlin, from Westminster, from Saint-Gudule and from Notre-Dame ; from all the great heights of human civilization, a unanimous cry will rise against the German menace : and this time, despite

the frightful weapons they have won from the progress of science, the Barbarians will find with amazement that right is also might.

12th December.

Just now I administered the last Sacraments to a Reservist badly wounded in the head, and that we had believed safe. The recovery was still so partial that a small indiscretion on his part suddenly put him back into a dangerous state, and now he is quite delirious. Reasonable and quite gentle about everything else, he is absolutely determined to rejoin his comrades as quickly as possible at the Front.

I assure him, alas ! that he shall soon depart, and besides, knowing him to be a firm Christian, I ask him if he will not, so as to fortify his soul against all dangers, receive Absolution, Communion, and the Sacrament for the Sick. He willingly consents, and, his fixed idea not gainsaid, he fulfils his religious duties with great calmness and lucidity. A few minutes later, as I sit beside his bed, he begins once more to talk to me about going ; he even gets excited, and in an eager voice, encourages the others on to battle. Then, again he says good-bye to me. Without any pretence I accept his adieus, and give him mine ; after which I embrace him and leave, lest I should weep.

13th December.

My Adjutant-Curate being there to give me con-

fidence, I was present last night at an illustrated lecture on "The Battle-Fields of the Marne." M. Gervais-Courtellemont, who gave it in the Gaveau Hall, was a witness of the fighting which took place in the second week of September in the environs of Meaux, and which was the beginning of our deliverance. After the victory, he was able to go over the battle-fields, and thanks to the coloured slides he himself took, to take us there with him.

Before the publishing in the *Bulletin des Armées* on the 5th December of "Quatre mois de Guerre," we had not understood much about the general uniformity of success which will keep the name of the victory of the Marne; it was enough for us to know that it had saved Paris from investment, and turned the chances of war in our favour. Coming in contact with wounded men who had taken part in it, I had, moreover, heard many details not given by the press. But these details were disjointed and were given from the inevitably narrow point of view of the individual combatant. On the other, hand, the official *résumé* of the *Bulletin* was too concise to give the right appreciation of the facts.

Yesterday's lecturer did, in great measure, fill up these gaps.

If, because of certain secrets difficult to fathom or to reveal, he was unable to set forth a complete story, or altogether keep to the language of history, at least his geography left nothing to be desired,

and he showed us the most vivid pictures of the theatre of the War ; or rather, by virtue of coloured photography in the hands of a clever artist, he made the theatre itself pass before our eyes. And we seemed to see the real plains where they fought, the hills that were cleared away, the trenches from which the enemy fired, the holes the shells made, the burnt villages, the belfries battered down, the graves above all, the countless graves where our soldiers sleep at the very spot where they died.

Under their mounds, flower-decked by pious hands, with the cross and the flag of France above them, they are not only the most touching and poetic sign of the struggle, but also the most instructive ; narrow and dispersed where it was less intense ; large and close together where it raged more furiously. If you care to know how far the German menace advanced, at what precise spots France, with heroic gesture, stood erect in face of the invader and cried to him : " Come no farther ! " seek them one by one, those sacred hillocks, and contemplate the windings of their last line.

At its extreme point, between Meaux and Dammartin, you will see it approach within a day and a half from the Capital ; there, on the 5th September, fought a Division of the Army of Paris. At five o'clock in the evening, under a hail of bullets, above Villeroy, a company pushing on to the attack approach the ridge where the Germans are intrenched.

The captain is already killed with one of his two lieutenants. The other gives the order: "Lie down and blaze away!" but he himself, in spite of remonstrances, stands upright, defying the guns. A bullet strikes him full in the forehead, and all his men fall after him; only one lives on, wounded, to serve as witness. Their grave was dug on the spot where they died. For this altar where the country began to see her sacrifice approved of Heaven, distinguished victims were needed; the lieutenant who commanded this handful of heroes was called Charles Péguy; Péguy, the herald of Jeanne d'Arc, the poet who best expressed Christian hope, and who, prophetically, wrote these lines:—

Heureux ceux qui sont morts pour la terre charnelle,
Mais pourvu que ce fût dans une juste guerre.
Heureux ceux qui sont morts pour quatre coins de terre,
Heureux ceux qui sont morts d'une mort solennelle.

Heureux ceux qui sont morts dans les grandes batailles,
Couchés dessus le sol à la face de Dieu. . . .

Heureux ceux qui sont morts pour leur âtre et leur feu
Et les pauvres honneurs des maisons paternelles. . . .

Heureux ceux qui sont morts, car ils sont retournés
Dans la première argile et la première terre,
Heureux ceux qui sont morts dans une juste guerre.
Heureux les épis mûrs et les blés moissonnés.[1]

[1] Ch. Péguy, *Morceaux choisis des Œuvres Poétiques* (Librairie Paul Ollendorf): Prière pour nous autres charnels.

Happy are those who have died for a living world,
Provided it was in a just war.
Happy are those who have died for a corner of earth,
Happy are those who have died a solemn death.

Happy are those who have died in great battles,
As they lie beneath the sod face to face with God.

Happy are those who have died for their hearths and their home
And the poor credit of the paternal house. . . .

Happy those who have died, for they have returned
To the first clay and the first earth;
Happy are those who have died in a righteous war.
Happy the ripe ears and the gathered corn.

18*th December.*

I have the pleasure of having for a neighbour at Neuilly, a both venerable and energetic colleague, M. le Chanoine L—— formerly a naval Chaplain, and formerly a Chaplain in the '70 war, a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour and decorated with several medals. On my arrival, he gave me a most brotherly welcome, and I am under many obligations to him. But the greatest of all is that he has been so kind lately as to associate himself with my duties and to visit some of our guests in my place. They were really more than I could manage to see every day and form with them those personal relations of friendship without which I have never been able to work fully upon souls. It is a necessity Saints might dispense with, more perfect intermediaries for grace from above; as for me, I am

obliged to give myself, before I can give God. The danger is that, thinking to give oneself, at times one looks for oneself in others. But one must take oneself as one is. Thanks to the kind Canon, I shall be able to resume my longer individual visits and the more intimate and effective talks. I am all the more glad because Christmas and the New Year are approaching, days on which our soldiers are liable to be saddened by the thought of their absent ones; festivals when it will need all the human sympathy and the love of God to console them for the separation as well as for so many other troubles.

Thoughts such as these fill all hearts just now. Outside there is talk of nothing but keeping Christmas for soldiers and wounded. With us, at the hospital, there is much thought given to it, and I think it will be well done. For my own part ambitious projects of hymns and ceremonies absorb me, all the more that I have not much experience of such things, and it is a question of making something out of nothing. God will provide, as Pius X used to say.

XVII

19th and 20th December.

It is twenty-nine years (a third of the longest life), since at Saint-Sulpice, just about this time of year, I was ordained and said my first Mass. The anniversary of those solemn joys does not take my mind off my present mission, quite the contrary; even more than usual my thoughts are with our wounded.

My poor friends! How long these December days must seem to them, shortest of the year as they are! What lies most heavy on the sick is the darkness, and nowadays the darkness lasts nearly fifteen hours.

So they are glad enough to see around them the morning stir begin with the dawn. In the half-light, there is the hospital-attendant filling the basins with warm water, the nurse laying brushes and combs, towels and soap upon the tables. At six o'clock, the electric lights are turned on and the toilet begins.

Mother-like, the nurse washes and combs her patient, while questioning him about his night of pain; to make more sure, she takes hold of his wrist and puts a thermometer under his tongue.

Pulse and temperature are taken morning and evening. The difference, especially that of the temperature, is astonishingly in favour of the morning.

During this time, housemaids clear the room with brooms and damp cloths. There are a great number of them, an army in the larger wards, so that the work may be got through speedily, for it is nearly time for breakfast, and they have to bring it in—bring it in, but not serve it; that, like all the attendance, is the duty of the hospital-attendants and nurses. It is their part, too, to make the beds and render even more material services. Their office is not for show, and it is easy to understand that some of them are at times in need of a holiday. There are others that have taken no rest since the opening of the hospital, and when one remembers that most of them are people in Society, accustomed to an idle life, one is struck with admiration for such self-sacrifice. And, it must be noted that we have always, especially as nurses, even night-nurses, many more offers than we can find room for.

As to the doctors, it is enough to say that in most of the operations they themselves do the dressing. From the officer of the day to the managers of the ordinary or the antiseptic linen; from the head of the transports to the head of the Bureau, there is no such thing as a sinecure, any more than there is in the various posts of administration or super-

intendence. It is especially a matter for astonishment to me, how, on certain days, the distinguished men who receive all the visitors and supply them with information, can feel equal to the task, and how the management which has superintended the house and its finances from the beginning can endure the fatigue.

Our patient, who has rested a little after his meal of *café-au-lait*, bread and porridge, at eight o'clock sees the entrance of the day nurses and hospital-attendants, who will be on duty till the same hour in the evening. Soon afterwards the doctor proceeds with the dressings; those who are able going to be dressed in special wards.

I have already described that moment both wished-for and dreaded; the baring of wounded limbs, the antiseptic cleansings, the changing of draining-tubes. The pain is made up for by prompt relief, and, while the doctor attends to his companions, our soldier, in his freshly-made bed, lets his mind relax a little.

But here is the newspaper—French or English—in which he will be able to follow the events of the War. With what interest he pores over the information, at times mysterious to us, but which recalls to him so many glorious feats of arms or fearful risks! However great a welcome is given to the hospital-attendants bringing in the papers, a still warmer one awaits him who distributes the correspondence.

Since the day, already far off, of his mobilization, the poor soldier has gone through nightmares of the battle-field, and dreams of victory—so strange a life, that it is ineffably sweet and soothing to him, to recover, in a beloved handwriting, the familiar pictures of his town or his village. Field, workship, parlour, it matters not; it is the normal and reasonable existence; it is home, it is the family, the persons and things he loves, all the good things whose value he feels the more for being separated from them, for having even just missed losing them at a blow. That is why he is so glad to get letters.

And so as to receive them, he will send them himself, though he is not fond of writing, and still less of dictating. This last is not rare here; you may be too ill; you may have your right arm in a sling or your fingers cut off; you may even—it has been met with—not know how to read. I began, and the nurse went on, teaching reading and writing to an intelligent and docile Zouave, who though living quite near Algiers, had never been to school.

However, it is easy to find secretaries, first of all among comrades who ask nothing better than to be of service; among the nurses and hospital-attendants when they are free; sometimes among the benevolent visitors; almost every day there is to be met in our wards an American of Paris,

a quite charming little old man—not so old either—who spends half his time acting as public-scrivener.

Let us add to this some talk from bed to bed of neighbours, a kind word or attention from a nurse, the visit of the officer of the day and the Chaplain, that of the hair-dresser or of companions able to walk, and the time for lunch has come unperceived.

At half-past-eleven exactly the cloth is laid. The bedridden patients have each his little private table; a larger one is placed in the middle of the ward for the others. All diets are in accordance with the doctor's orders; normal stomachs enjoy an ordinary bill-of-fare, generally composed of fish or eggs, meat, vegetables and dessert.

From noon to two o'clock, while those in bed doze, those who are up, if the weather is not too bad, go to take the air on the balconies, which are also accessible at other times, except when reasons of health forbid. Fresh air is welcomed here; the ventilators in every ward are constantly open, and, as often as it is prudent, the windows themselves. To the two big balconies on the first story three small ones have been added on the ground-floor, and on all, in addition to the independent wounded who have got there all by themselves, may be seen infirm men brought in wheeled armchairs, or really bad cases, which a

clever mechanism enables to be carried along in their beds.

Means of transport must needs be brought to perfection in such a hospital. It is not on a stretcher that the badly wounded can be carried to the radium-ward, or those for plaster-work or dentistry, or to the surgery for wounds in the head, or to the operating-theatre.

And I perceive that I have made no notes on these most essential services, not even on the last, by far the most important in a house like this, where most of the doctors are surgeons, and we receive scarcely any one but wounded who depend on their skill. Forced, by limited knowledge, to be silent about these many doings of our practitioners, at least I can testify to their great efficiency wherever the wound itself is not mortal, or too inveterate.

I have seen wonderful cures ; heads disfigured and swollen brought back to normal lines; broken jaw-bones renewed and furnished with beautiful teeth ; arms and legs which seemed as if they must always be useless, restored. I have seen wrenched from death gangrenous patients it thought its prey, and to whom I have had to give absolution in its briefest form.

A specialist would have marvels to describe here. We may hope it will be done at least for one of the auxiliary services, the laboratory for clinical

examination and for pathological research. The immediate aim of that laboratory is to specialize in diagnostics and so direct treatment; it will moreover contribute to the advance of science by the methodical observation of facts rare in normal times, but frequent at the present day.

But let us return to our wounded man and the way he employs his day.

We left him, about two o'clock, resting in his ward or on the balcony. He is growing restless and turning his eyes towards the door or bending over the balustrade to look down into the avenue; he is expecting visitors. Every day from two to four he may be visited by his relations; on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays by his friends or charitable strangers, who are not, however, admitted without strict references.

One can guess what, on the first day, is the emotion of a father, or mother, a wife, a sister, at the sight of the beloved patient.

Will they have to mourn over a hopeless mutilation, the loss of a leg, an arm or his eyesight? Are they, still worse, to dread a fatal issue, and are they come only to be present at his death-bed? Each case may occur, the last, alas! like the others; but, thank God! the first is much the most frequent, and most of the visitors have the joy of seeing the gradual convalescence of their son, their husband, or their brother.

Whether comforting or mournful, the visit must end at four o'clock. If dressing has to be done again it is done then; temperature and pulse are taken a second time. The patients under diet may take at this time some light refreshment, and soon, about six o'clock, after the washing of face and hands, as in fashionable society, it will be the time for dinner for all.

While waiting for it they talk or play patience, or cards, or draughts or dominoes according to their mood. A good employment for leisure hours is crochet or knitting; but few have a taste for it. And, by the way, I have surprised our young ex-savage Mouça, in the act of making himself a comforter!

They read, too, almost too much.

The librarian has granted me the run of the library, which I don't abuse, but which has all the same resulted in the substitution of some books for others. None ought to be given out but such as are educative, and by that I don't mean only instructive books, but all, whether amusing or serious, which possess a minimum of literary worth.

Above all to simple and little cultivated minds, with no protection against ugliness and evil, nothing but what is good and beautiful should be offered.

Those who are really bad do not read, except for the papers; neither do they play games, and they speak very little; what they need most is rest; they have enjoyed from time to time in the day time

a few good but too short intervals of it; but the evening brings with it a recrudescence of fever, and the coming of night brings apprehensions of sleeplessness broken by nightmares.

After dinner the electric-lamps are gradually put out, and at eight o'clock only one small shaded one is left on the nurses's table, and the painful night-watch begins, to many eased by well-remembered prayers and the leaving of all things to God's care.

What comforts them all is the knowledge that at the smallest sign the nurse will come, never weary of turning the pillow, finding the lost handkerchief, or an easier way of lying; giving something to drink, encouraging, petting, scolding maternally. Or perhaps she will administer a tabloid that will make one sleep well.

Sleep well! The supreme desire, unrealizable for so many weeks, and which, for our poor friend will not be granted even now. He turns and turns about, unless his wound is of such a nature that even that alleviation is not possible to him; he sighs, but without grudging, as he hears the regular breathing of his more fortunate neighbour; full of compassion he listens to the moans that come from another bed; at last torpor seizes him and he closes his heavy eyelids.

But it is only, in a dream, to see himself once more in the trenches, many comrades joking over their discomforts, only once more to

take his place in that night-march against the Germans, which forced them to fall back and allowed us to gain more than a hundred metres. The cannons roar, the bullets whistle, the big shells heave up heaps of earth; there is a louder report, a bomb bursts nearer, and here he is lying on the ground in a pool of blood.

With a start, our wounded man wakes up, astonished at his peaceful surroundings; by degrees he remembers where he is, grows calm, and after another hour, closes his eyes again. The exhausting dreams are renewed; this time it is the dressing-station, the painful dressing, the transport, the jolting in the ambulance cars and trains, the midnight arrival at the strange hospital.

But what is this disturbance in the ward? Is he asleep or awake? Is it somebody else being brought in or himself being carried out? Is he, for the fourth or fifth time going to change his bed of pain? His fevered mind can make nothing of it. When will the light of day come to put an end to all this confusion and anguish?

Ordinarily the night is spent more peacefully, but at times it is disturbed by still more troublous visions.

In one of his too frequent awakings, he perceives that screens have been placed round the bed of his neighbour, one of the worst cases. Into this impromptu little room slip cautiously

shadows he thinks he recognizes as the doctor, the Chaplain, and a visitor who has spent the whole day there in silence, and who now has great difficulty in stilling her sobs.

What are they doing and whispering about? Our patient turns round, so as to see and hear less. But after an hour or two the little party disperses, a first group more rapidly, the second more slowly and as if, in the half-darkness, they were carrying away a sacred burden.

When our friend wakes for good in the morning, his neighbour is no longer there. He thinks, he tries to think, that he has been taken to another ward.

XVIII

23rd December.

Our preparations for Christmas, music and decoration, are getting on better than I could have believed. Still I must interrupt them for a moment to note down a very original arrival: that of a sergeant of Zouaves and his dog "Fend-l'Air," who, for a time, was called "Tue-Boches."

Their story has been told in the papers with the addition of far from accurate details. It is quite pretty enough to stand by itself. I am going to give it as I heard it from the Zouave this morning. If there are gaps in it, it is because I did not want him to talk too much; he is very weak still.

It was on the 12th December he was wounded, at Roclincourt, near Arras, in a trench, or rather a branch of a trench, on the first line. Branches are the passages which connect the trenches. A bomb burst near him, killing his neighbours and covering him with earth, the displacement of air having made the planks that supported the wall give way. Badly hurt, three-parts covered with earth, with no one near him but dead comrades, he was giving way to despondency, when his dog,

which had not left him during the course of the War, came up to him, eager to do what he could and uttering the most loving lamentations.

"It is not true that he dug me out, but he revived my spirits. I began to disengage my arms, my head, and the rest of my body; and, seeing this, he began himself to scratch his best all round me and then to fawn upon me and lick my wounds. The lower part of my right leg was torn off, the left struck in the calf, a splinter of shell in the thigh, two fingers gone and my left arm burnt. I dragged myself all bleeding as far as the trench where I waited for an hour for the stretcher-bearers. They took me to the dressing-station at Roclincourt, where they took off my foot with its boot; it was held on only by a sinew. From there I was carried on a stretcher to Anzin; then in a car to another dressing-station, where they cut some more off me; then to the hospital at Houvin-Hauvigneul, where I stayed five or six days. An ambulance-train took me after that to Aubervilliers, from where I came here. My dog had been present at the first dressing, and came to meet me at Anzin; he was allowed to be with me at the hospital and in the ambulance-train."

At the Aubervilliers station they were obliged to be separated; seeing how serious the case of the poor Zouave was, the military surgeon ordered his evacuation to us.

"May my dog go with me?" asked the wounded man.

Much touched as he was, the surgeon could not take it upon himself to send a dog to the military hospital.

"But what will become of him? and how shall I find him again?"

The lady at the head of the canteen promised to keep him and to take care of him.

"Thank you, Madame; but hold him well in, or he would burst himself if he couldn't follow the ambulance."

In fact it was not without difficulty that, after the two friends had said farewell to each other, the one that was left was held back.

More than one of the nurses were moved to tears at the sight.

The editor of a newspaper writes:

"Safely tied-up in the canteen-van, overwhelmed with dainties he would not touch, he stayed there two days. Having forgotten to ask his name, they ingeniously called him Tue-Boches.

"'My little Tue-Boches! Dear Tue-Boches, eat your soup. Your master is going on well! you'll soon see him again! Here's a bit of sugar. . .' But Tue-Boches kept silent, refused everything, like to die of grief.

"The whole canteen was in despair; they could not stand it.

"'Come, Tue-Boches,' said the directress, 'we will try to get you back to your friend.'

"And they went to the American Hospital and told the story of the saving of the Zouave; and the dog, duly combed and washed with the most refined antiseptics, was admitted to the hospital where he found his master and his appetite once again. Admired by all, resplendent and happy, Fend-l'Air never quits the bedside of his recovered friend. Both are doing wonderfully well; they will shortly go back to the Front to become once more together, as heartily as before, valiant Tue-Boches."

These last words, to be perfectly correct, require a few little alterations. It is quite true that Fend-l'Air is admired and looked after as if he were a King's dog, but not that he is perfectly happy, nor that he spends the whole of his time with his master. It is not true, either, that his master is already well again, nor that, with a foot amputated, there is any question of his going back to the Front. Fend-l'Air understands all this, and during the short visits he is allowed to make every morning, after a tender and discreet greeting, he knows perfectly well that it is best to sit very quietly at the foot of the bed, his eyes fixed on his sick friend.

27th December.

Our Christmas festivities went off admirably

from every point of view, and I should like to have described them sooner, but the night of the festival I was overcome with sleep, and yesterday we had fifteen badly wounded men brought in.

Compassion for the sufferings of these new-comers did not need, even on this morning of the festival, any great change of sentiments; it had been but too easy to keep a grave and melancholy note in our rejoicings. But they had their charms none the less, and I think that in more than one mind they will leave beautiful memories. When presently, on the shores of the lakes of Scotland or Ireland, on the Breton heaths, among the mountains of Auvergne, in the African deserts, our guests think of the gigantic war in which they just escaped death, a gentle vision—as in a dream of light and harmony and flowers—will show out against that terrible phase of their existence, and it will be the vision of the Christmas celebrated in the American Hospital.

To begin with, the preparations were interesting. While the nurses hung great branches of mistletoe, from the ceiling, or tied great bunches of holly bound with red ribbons to the window-catches the slightly wounded soldiers gladly handed them the evergreens or held the ladders for them, and the patients from their beds watched their doings, and saw the tables being covered with flowers and pretty trifles and the electric lamps being

draped in many-coloured silks. Every window even, in every corridor, had its share of greenery, and no one knows the full length of our corridors or the exact number of our windows.

The flags of the Allied Nations and that of the United States hung everywhere; big ones were nailed above the doors and along the walls, and little ones were stuck even into the boxes of medicines and the corks of the bottles of sterilized water.

A final effort after the morning's dressings, and, on the 24th December, everything was ready at lunch-time. But it was not until three o'clock in the afternoon that, in the linen-room, the ceremony of the Christmas-tree began.

A fir-tree brilliant with little lamps of course occupied the centre of the room, and beside it stood a majestic Father Christmas, with hoary beard and in his traditional costume of crimson and ermine. All our wounded who were able to walk—perhaps half—passed before him in succession and received a present from his hands. Most of us were present at this march-past, and at first it pleased us, it even cheered us by the pleasure the presents gave; but by degrees other feelings took possession of us at the sight of that long line of mutilated men, and I was left almost alone, having wished to shake hands with each, when the two-hundredth in his turn passed by, hopping on his crutches.

Those who were kept to their beds, although worse, were really a less saddening sight, their infirmities being hidden. Father Christmas took care not to forget them; he passed through each ward, he stopped beside each bed, accompanied by a choir of nurses who all the while sang beautiful hymns; French *cantiques*, English and American Christmas Carols. I like especially the "Come, all ye Faithful," adapted note by note, to our magnificent words, *Adeste Fideles*.

About four o'clock, a concert was held, a part in a large ward and a part in the angle of two corridors, so that as many as possible should hear it. A talented singer sang a touching song from *La Vivandière*, another from *Carmen* and the *Marseillaise*.

And then silence and order held sway once more. At six o'clock, as usual, dinner was eaten and soon the lamps were shaded into night-lights. It was not a day to be over-tired if you wished to come to Midnight Mass.

And did they wish to come? Verily, I don't think that of those who got permission one was wanting, and permission was refused only to those patients for whom it would have been really imprudent. And with them were present, almost in full number, the staff in all its branches, from the officer of the day, who came back from Paris on purpose, to the housemaids who would have to

begin their work at six o'clock in the morning. Among the nurses and hospital-attendants none were absent save such as had the care of the bed-ridden. There was not an empty place in the Chapel or the galleries. I don't say that all had come with the same religious belief; many were not Catholics; some even may have had no faith at all; but all behaved with perfect reverence, and if one may believe what was said next day, no one left without a feeling of profound emotion.

The Chapel was all decorated with wreaths and boughs; on the Altar the sober light of the candles shone upon a mass of green plants, brightened too by white lilac and guelder-roses. A magnificent palm framed with its foliage the tabernacle and even the crucifix, and higher still, on the wall at the end, a sheaf of flags of the Allies and America put the work of our hospital under the Heavenly protection.

But the real ornament of our Chapel was the presence of the many wounded. The picturesque variety of the costumes and the difference of races was not that which struck one most, but their wounds themselves, told but too clearly by the bandages that bound their heads or covered their hands; the slings that supported their arms; the crutches on which they leaned; the armchairs even in which some of them had had themselves brought in. Round about the Christ, truly present

on the Altar, it was such a scene as was marvelled at in Galilee nineteen-hundred years ago. And at the moment of the Communion held out to many of them by my trembling hands, the melodious voice at the far end of the Chapel was not mistaken when it divinely sang:

Heaven has visited the Earth.

All our solo-singers, all our chorus, all the accompaniments, were provided by the hospital itself; to our nurses and hospital-attendants who had cared for the pains of the body was given the power of touching the heart and of expressing its noblest feelings. Both at the Midnight Mass and at Benediction in the afternoon, they all sang; the only exception was the wife of one of our most seriously wounded patients. She represented all those who, from afar, on this day of customary joy, were mentally watching at the bedside of those they loved and grieved at not being able to care for, perhaps never to see again.

But of all the great memories of our Christmas, that which will remain with me the greatest of all, is to have that morning carried the joy and strength of Communion to about forty wounded men in their beds of pain, some of them, all unknowing, in danger of death.

If God had never used me for anything else, I should thank Him for having created me and made me a priest.

Several of those who listened to my short sermon at the Midnight Mass, having asked to read it, I will venture with humbleness to reproduce it here.

MESDAMES,

MES CHERS AMIS,

Of all the Christmases we have celebrated since our infancy, this year's, despite the delightful festivities of the afternoon, will not be the most joyful, you well know why; but perchance it may remain in your memory as the most touching, the greatest and the most Divine. This would be suggested by the sight alone of our Hospital Chapel, so beautifully adorned with flowers and lights, with hymns and greenery, but especially adorned with what our Lord looks upon as a thousand times greater—your numerous and devout attendance.

Yes; it is touching, this Christmas of 1914, the Christmas of the terrible year; or, no, not the terrible year but as some one has said in view of so much self-sacrifice, so much devotion and so many hopes, the Christmas of the sublime year.

It is a touching one, this Christmas of 1914, in the bosom of the families where the old mother and the young wife, choking back their tears, say to the children, grown serious themselves, "Pray to Jesus for Papa or the big brother, who is fighting out there."

It is touching in the snow-clad woods, in the freezing trenches, where those we love suffer and fight with their noble courage for us. On their beds of straw—which so well recall the stable at Bethlehem—they are dreaming of us as we dream of them, our poor, our splendid soldiers; they are praying with us at this sacred hour of *Minuit, Chrétiens!* and, like Mary, Joseph and the Shepherds long ago—from their ill-protected shelter, they are gazing at the Winter stars, listening to hear if the Choir of Angels will sing its hymn once more: "Glory to God in the Highest and Peace on Earth (and peace on earth!) to Men of Good Will."

Glory to God in the Highest! Peace on Earth to men! Ah! how far we are from that! Glory to God? On the contrary, how badly is He obeyed, who so insistently commanded, "Therefore love one another!" And as for Peace on Earth, all you who listen to me, know but too well what that is; you dear wounded victims of the War, you admirable women, men of heart and knowledge, whose whole effort is given to repairing its evils.

And yet, as ever for nineteen centuries, this year again resounds that angelic song: "Glory to God in the Highest! Peace to Men!" And in one way it rings true, more true than it ever did.

"Glory to God!" Faith is rekindling, piety is being born anew, morals are amending; devotion

purifying hearts, courage growing higher, voluntary self-sacrifice breeding heroes, resignation under suffering multiplying saints.

"Peace on Earth to Men!" Beyond the blood-filled rivers, behind the burning villages, a dawn can be foretold, a rising hope of a better and more enduring peace, a really pacific peace; dearly-bought, it is true, but more beautiful, more fruitful, truer than the bellicose peace which was but lately stifling the world. Our generation will have borne the brunt, but our descendants will be happier than we; all this crimson of war, all this crimson of blood, is a beam from the dawn, and soon the Sun of Justice will arise. Noël, Noël! Here is Redemption.

But the peace between men, this fraternal concord, it is not only in the future that it may be contemplated. Don't you feel, my brothers and sisters, that it reigns amongst us here? Is it not that which in this hospital unites us from all the corners of the Earth, the Old World and the New, in our beautiful mission of pity, in that care of body and soul which it is sweet to receive after so many trials, and sweeter still to give?

Is it not this peace, this concord which gathers us together at the foot of the Altar we have just left, to adore the Divine Child in His Mother's arms and to pray to Him with hearts in unison?

Let us pray to Him therefore, with our homag

to grant our ardent desires. Let us ask Him to support the combatants and heal the wounded; to take to Himself those that are dead and to comfort those who mourn; and lastly to shorten this frightful war, or at least to let us, enemies as well as Allies, profit by it for the good of our souls and our countries, for the progress of the human race.

Let us ask it by our public hymns and our private prayers; let us ask it by the communion in which the happiest among you will presently take part; let us ask it by the sacred Sacrifice of the Mass, in which Jesus the Redeemer, as at Bethlehem, as on Calvary, is about to offer Himself to thank and glorify our Heavenly Father for the remission of our sins, for the salvation and peace of the world.

28th December.

One of those who received Holy Communion in their beds, the Irishman X—— who has been suffering martyrdom here for three months, showed some gladness this morning when he showed me the pretty gifts sent him by the Queen as to all the English wounded. The men at the Front receive rather different ones.

Our sick man asks me to take from his shelf a gilt box whose cover bears the portrait of the Queen, surrounded by inscriptions; at the top, *Imperium Britannicum*; at the bottom, *Christmas*, 1914; on the left, *France*; on the right, Russia; at the

four corners, *Belgium, Serbia, Montenegro, Japan.* I open the pretty box and find inside a pipe, a packet of cigarettes and a packet of tobacco; and, besides these substantial presents, a charming little card bearing the words: "The best wishes of Princess Mary and friends in the country for a happy Christmas and a victorious New Year."

Another card bears the portraits of the two Sovereigns, with these words in facsimile of the King's handwriting on the back: "Our best wishes for Christmas 1914. May you soon be restored to health!—George."

All these gracious details give to the Royal gift a personal and intimate character which is surely not what touches the poor wounded men the least.

Neither in France are the fighters or wounded forgotten. From the whole nation, from the children even, innumerable evidences of affection and gratitude have reached them. And no doubt the other countries have done the same. In all history there has perhaps been no Christmas so sorrowful as that of 1914; but perhaps there has never been another so beautiful. Once more the Star of Bethlehem has shed its soft light amid the blackness of the night, and of the God made Man it can be said, "His light shineth in darkness."

29th December.

At half-past four o'clock this morning I closed

the eyes of the admirable Charles Marêe, the man who won the medal for having in the middle of the night thrown himself and his car across the road to stop two German armoured cars. In him the Christian equalled the soldier. Twice a week, at the end of the large ward, he edified his companions and the nurses by receiving with touching piety the Holy Communion. During the nearly three months in which he suffered constant tortures, never did he utter complaints. It could be said of him that, literally, he had shed all his blood for France. Since the first flood of it he lost from his wound on that night of heroic encounter, how many hæmorrhages had, drop by drop, drained his strength away! Yesterday morning, there was so great a one that he asked for me without delay, and after having given him once again the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, I administered also Extreme Unction.

We spoke of his possible death, I, perhaps, more moved than he, but both of us with quiet and serenity. I promised him that, if he should die, I would say Mass for him the next day; I did not think that it would be the very next. He gave me his last messages, especially one telling his own people that he had died "like a good patriot and a good Christian."

What could be added to such words? Spoken by his lips, they kept their full significance.

31*st December.*

We buried him to-day. His loss is felt by all, and all vied in showing sympathy to his family, by which I mean his uncles and aunts. His father and mother are in a part of the country occupied by the German army, and during the three months since he was wounded, no attempt to put him in communication with them has succeeded. And he was their only son, and such a son!

"He was their all," his uncle said to me, "and their support as well, for he had taken the place of his sick father as the head of their business."

When the news reaches them—— May his prayers obtain for them the power to bear it, as he did, "like patriots and good Christians"!

With him we carried to the cemetery two other poor soldiers, and there are three at the point of death. We had been less tried for a few weeks past. The year 1914 desired a retinue worthy of it—a retinue of dying and dead. It has even had suitable weather of storms and icy rain; it was only blood that was wanting. But no; blood mingles with the mire on the plains of Flanders and Poland, with the snow on the slopes of the Vosges, the Carpathians and the Caucasus; its crimson traces are to be seen in the fields, amid the ruined villages, in the streets of bombarded towns, in the waters of disputed rivers, on the wreckage the sea casts back. Oh! how frightful a year!

But still, the wonderful year, the "sublime year"![1] the year of self-sacrifice, of reconciliation and heroism.

God alone knows the good that has come out of all this suffering, the still greater good that will come; it is why He has permitted it, and why He has not put an end to the unbridling of criminal, but free, wills to which it is due.

We, too, will some day recognize this good so dearly bought. We shall enjoy it, not only, like our beloved dead, in that invisible world where each of us harvests in fruits of joy or grief that which he sowed of goodness or evil; we shall enjoy it even in this world, where the Divine Justice which unbelievers also worship as we do, only under another name, always ends by portioning out to the peoples, according to their conduct, prosperity or failure, glory or dishonour.

May the year that begins to-morrow bring forth without too much delay the precious gifts we hope for! May it soon bring us peace, not an unwieldy and menacing peace like that which for a long time past has held this war concealed within it, but a real and durable peace, firmly guaranteed by the agreement of the majority of the finest nations; a peace in which humanity, cured of its

[1] To quote the memorable words of M. Etienne Lamy in his address at the annual public sitting of the *Académie française*.

errors by hard experience, will have no other care but to remedy past evils, and to respect the rights of all.

And how great the joy to think that in that nearing future of reparation our country will be one of the most favoured! With her lost boundaries she will recover honour and independence; not only will her enemies no longer have power to harm her, but given over as they are to the worship of strength, they will respect her because of her victory.

Her friends will treat her, as they do already, as a queen of grace and valour. The children given back to her after half a century of captivity, will form on her new frontier a rampart of love and devotion. And as for those who did not leave her, but who too often grieved her with their dissensions, they will have recognized themselves in the hour of danger as indissoluble members of one family. After having shed their blood for the same heritage, for the same ideal, they will not be found ready to compromise the result of such sacrifices, to disconcert their faithful Allies and awake hopes of revenge in the vanquished enemy, by rending each other afresh.

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